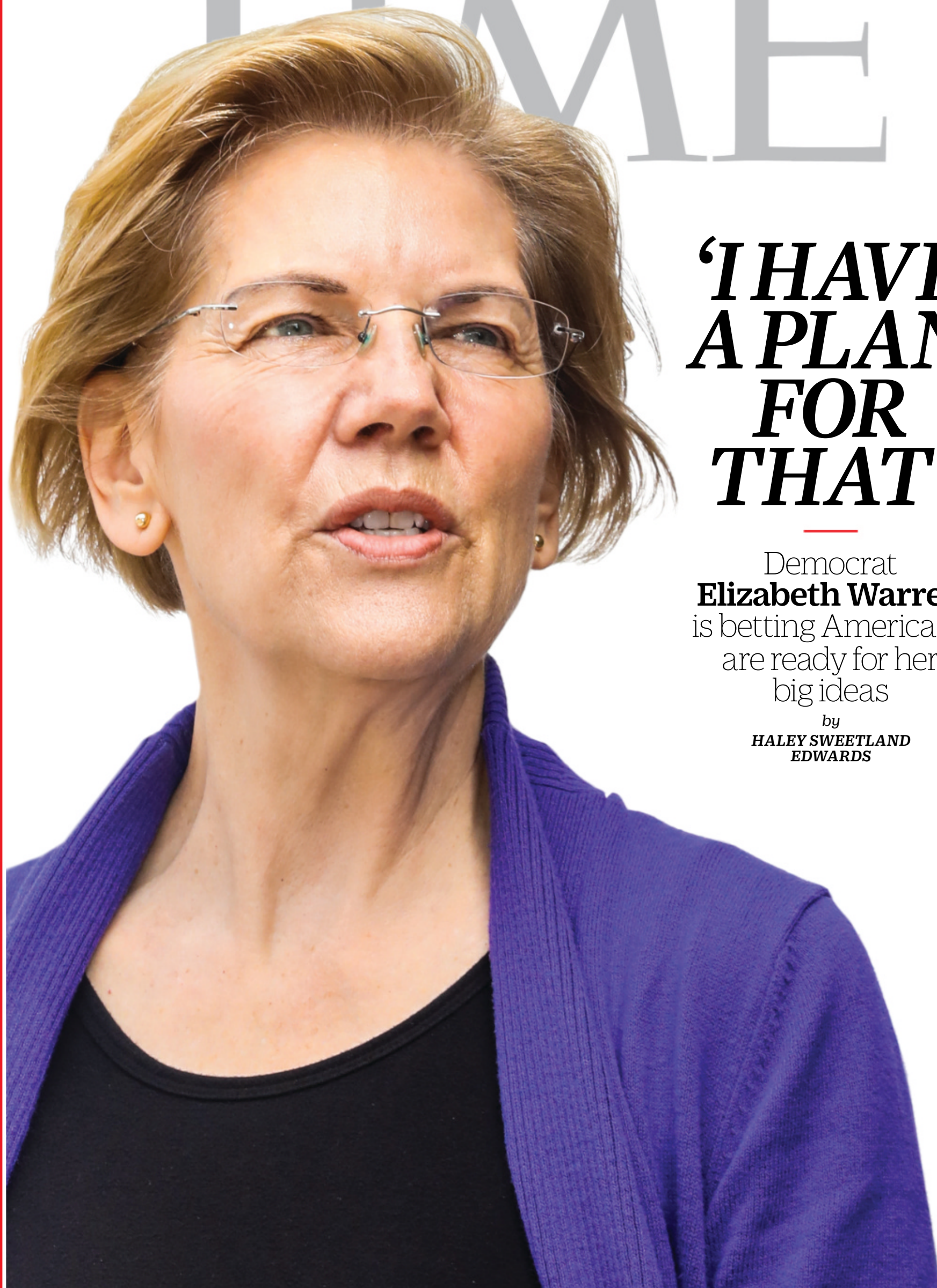


# TIME

## ***‘I HAVE A PLAN FOR THAT’***

Democrat  
**Elizabeth Warren**  
is betting Americans  
are ready for her  
big ideas

by  
**HALEY SWEETLAND  
EDWARDS**







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ON THE COVER  
AND ABOVE:  
Photographs by  
Krista Schlueter  
for TIME



# Conversation



## WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT...

**FIRST FAMILY** Charlotte Alter's May 13 profile of 2020 Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, who was pictured on the cover with his husband Chasten, left many readers moved by what Buttigieg's candidacy means for LGBTQ people—who “know what it's like to have to fight for space in the public square,” as Bernie Evans of Black Creek, Ga., put it. Colorado's Governor Jared Polis tweeted that “whatever candidate you support,” the cover should “inspire the celebration of love and family in all its forms.” It drew praise from Judy S. Lejuez of Springfield, N.J., a Republican who said she is “obsessed” with the “highly qualified” candidate, but Michael Falls of Whittier, Calif., argued that Buttigieg's policies, not his sexual orientation, should have gotten the cover treatment.

***‘If only 13-year-old Chasten could’ve seen 29-year-old Chasten.’***

CHASTEN BUTTIGIEG, on Instagram

**TIME 100** Our 2019 list of the 100 most influential people in the world (April 29/ May 6) continues to inspire discussion about the meaning of influence. On Twitter, tennis star Billie Jean King described the franchise as a list of people “fighting to make the world

***‘A very inspiring list and tributes. So needed in this current atmosphere of negativity.’***

JACQUELINE WRIGHT, Gainesville, Fla.

a better, kinder, more equal place for us all,” while Rhys McCarney of Potomac, Md., argued that such a list should include more scientists, but that our society “undervalues the influence of invention.” And Ann M. Giantvalley of Sandpoint, Idaho, wrote that “the most

influential people in most of our lives, often our true heroes” are actually “our families, our neighbors, our teachers.”

## CALLING ALL KIDS

Do you know a child who loves to write and dreams of being a reporter? TIME for Kids' Kid Reporters have interviewed influential people like Selena Gomez, Malala Yousafzai and Trevor Noah, who talked (*at right*) to TFK Kid Reporter Roman Peterson in March. Now we're looking for a new crew of 10 TFK Kid Reporters for the 2019–20 school year. Contest entrants can be no older than 13 on Sept. 1. Learn more at [timeforkids.com](http://timeforkids.com)



**KUDOS** TIME and artist Tim O'Brien took top honors at the Art Directors Club awards on May 6. Three 2018 covers illustrated by O'Brien, working with TIME creative director D.W. Pine, were recognized: “Stormy” (April 23) won gold in their category, while “In Deep” (Sept. 3) won silver and “King Me” (June 18) won bronze. Read the cover stories at [time.com/vault](http://time.com/vault)



**SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT** In “The New Guy” (May 13), we misstated the requirements to expand the U.S. Supreme Court. Congress has the power to increase the number of Justices.

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# For the Record

'We're moving backwards instead of forwards.'

**ROBERT LIGHTHIZER**, U.S. Trade Representative, on continuing U.S.-China trade tensions, as the U.S. prepared to increase tariffs on Chinese goods



## 22.7

Height, in feet, of the Mississippi River around Rock Island, Ill., when it crested during flooding on May 3, setting a record amid heavy rain and melting snow

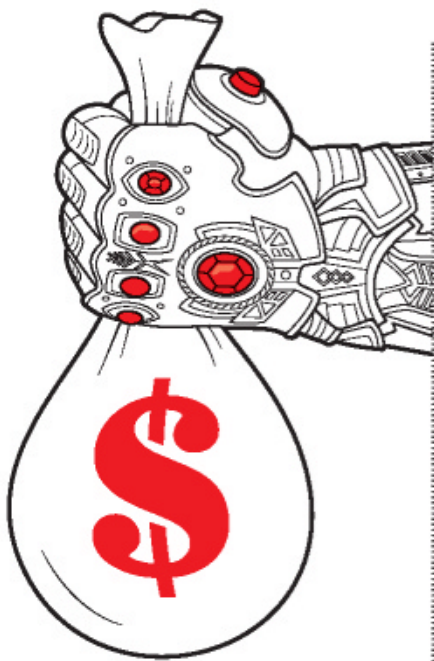
**Woodstock**  
Founder of imperiled 50th-anniversary festival claims that investors mismanaged funds



**Woods**  
Tiger Woods receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom after winning the 2019 Masters

'I thought I'd win a few episodes, but I did not expect this level of play.'

**JAMES HOLZHAUER**, professional gambler, on his *Jeopardy!* winning streak of 22 games as of May 3, before the show went on a two-week break for the Teachers Tournament; he has earned \$1,691,008 so far



## \$2.2 billion

Global box office for *Avengers: Endgame* after two weekends, making it the fastest film ever to pass \$2 billion

'I am not a politician, but I can talk about what is moral.'

**HATICE CENGIZ**, fiancée of the late journalist Jamal Khashoggi; she plans to meet with members of Congress in mid-May about the role of Saudi Arabia in his murder

'IF ANYBODY ELSE DID THAT, IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A CRIME.'

**NANCY PELOSI**, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, accusing U.S. Attorney General William Barr of lying to Congress about the Mueller report's findings, in a May 2 press conference

'There still remains much to be told.'

**MICHAEL COHEN**, President Trump's former personal lawyer, on May 6, before starting his three-year prison sentence for tax evasion, bank fraud and campaign-finance violations

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME



# The Brief

## FOR THE RIDE

Drivers protested Uber and its peers on May 8 in New York and in other cities around the world



## INSIDE

A U.N. REPORT HIGHLIGHTS GRIM THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

STATES PUSH BACK ON MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS

THE NEW ROYAL BABY BREAKS WITH TRADITION

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDUARDO MUNOZ



## ECONOMY

### Uber's IPO highlights American divisions

By Alana Semuels

**T**HE INSTANT UBER SHARES HIT THE New York Stock Exchange on May 10, people and groups from the company's ex-CEO Travis Kalanick to Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund are set to make millions, even billions, of dollars. In all, Uber's initial public offering (IPO) could set the company's value at as much as \$90 billion, likely the year's biggest such deal.

Uber's nearly 4 million drivers, however, probably won't benefit much. In fact, they're likely to see take-home pay worsen in coming years, as the ride-share company, to meet shareholder expectations, will inevitably look to cut incentives like bonuses for completing a set number of rides. Frustrated with what they view as worsening conditions even before the IPO, some drivers launched a global strike on May 8, just before the slated offering. Uber drivers on six continents promised to turn off their apps, some for the morning rush, others for the entire day. The protest garnered widespread support on social media, with tweets from people like Bernie Sanders, and attracted hordes of camera crews outside Uber's San Francisco headquarters—though few users reported any problems hailing a ride. “I’m not against people making money if they invested,” says San Francisco-based driver Derrick Baker. “But even if they don’t give us a piece of the pie, at least give back the money they took from us.”

Uber says it's doing exactly that, offering long-time workers a “cash driver appreciation” bonus of \$100 to \$10,000; the company plans to give out a total of about \$300 million to 1.1 million drivers. But that didn't appease strikers, and Uber itself acknowledged in pre-IPO filings that as it takes steps to seek profitability, “we expect driver dissatisfaction will generally increase.”

**THAT THE IPO** could make billions for some while driving down other Americans' pay is symptomatic of something larger. In Uber's case, as in the wider economy, people with stable jobs and cash to invest stand to do better financially while everyone else does worse. “We live in this time of increasing inequality, and Uber is in this odd and difficult position of having a lot of that within the company itself,” says Paul Oyer, an economics professor at Stanford's Graduate School of Business.

Uber and other companies are pouring billions into technology that could render human driv-

ers obsolete, though that remains far afield. More immediately, growing inequality in cities like San Francisco and New York is making it harder for Uber drivers—and others—to stay there. Lauren Swiger, another protesting driver, says she's been with Uber for more than four years, in which time her rent has tripled; she now pays \$4,150 for a three-bedroom Oakland, Calif., house. When she first started driving, she made about \$30 an hour before expenses. Now she struggles to clear \$15, she says, and wants Uber to guarantee a minimum wage and pay transparency. “Their whole business model is based on worker exploitation,” she says.

But drivers like Baker and Swiger have limited power. The Labor Department last month signaled that gig workers should be classified as independent contractors rather than employees, reversing guidance issued under Obama's Administration; as contractors, Uber drivers don't receive benefits and can't unionize. And while the U.S. unemployment rate is historically low, many workers are involuntarily part time. The result is an oversupply of people competing for gig jobs, which is great for companies like Uber but less so for workers. “There is a pretty big pool of people who are either voluntarily or involuntarily part of the Uber labor pool,” says Mark Muro, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

The company has grown exponentially in use, with drivers completing 10 billion trips by June 2018, about twice the number it had achieved the summer before. But it also lost a whopping \$1.8 billion in 2018, spending not just on incentives but also to expand geographically, buy rivals and add new lines of business. The IPO may require a new strategy; investors, many tech companies have found out the hard way, are less forgiving when stocks fluctuate with every earnings report. The profitability push is likely to lead to driver discontent, and the company admits that could threaten its future too: if drivers find other work, increased wait times could leave riders unhappy.

Sensing the bumpy road ahead, Uber under Dara Khosrowshahi (who was named CEO in August 2017, months after Kalanick resigned) has taken measures to satisfy drivers. In June 2017, it launched a “180 Days of Change” campaign that sought to improve conditions by letting them earn tips directly in the app, access 24/7 phone support and get notifications if they're about to embark on a long trip. They've earned \$1.2 billion in tips since the introduction of in-app tipping, Uber says. “Drivers are at the heart of our service—we can't succeed without them,” the company said in a statement. But some drivers clearly remain angry and—like many Americans—more than a little nervous about what's ahead. “In my mind,” Swiger says, “Big Tech needs to pay for the Big Tech boom.”

**\$45.3 million**

2018 compensation for Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi

**40%**

Share of app-based drivers in New York City whose incomes are so low they qualify for Medicaid, according to study by the New School

**4.7 million**

Number of U.S. workers in April 2019 who were working part time involuntarily, per the Bureau of Labor Statistics





**GIFT HORSE** Country House (*left*) was awarded first place by race authorities in the 145th Kentucky Derby on May 4 after Maximum Security (*third from left*) was disqualified. Stewards ruled Maximum Security, who passed the post first, had strayed out of his lane on the rain-sodden track and so handed a controversial victory to a 65-1 long shot. Maximum Security's owner, Gary West, intends to appeal the decision, which marked the first time an apparent winner was disqualified on Derby day.

#### THE BULLETIN

## A million species—and human society—face dire risk

**HUMAN ACTIVITY HAS CAUSED SO MUCH** damage to the earth that 1 million of the planet's 8 million plant and animal species now face the threat of extinction, many within decades, a startling U.N. biodiversity report warned on May 6. The loss of species, which is now happening "tens to hundreds of times" as fast as the average rate over the past 10 million years, poses a dire threat to ecosystems all over the world. Here are some of the takeaways.

**UNNATURAL HISTORY** There are more than 7 billion people on earth, exploiting natural resources, causing pollution and driving climate change—and the report casts that impact in stark relief. Urban areas have almost doubled in size since 1992, and crop production has tripled since 1970. Pollution from plastics has gone up tenfold since 1980. Human activity has "severely altered" 66% of marine and 75% of land environments; in most land habitats, the average abundance of native species has fallen by a fifth. More than 33% of marine mammals, almost a third of reef-forming corals and 40% of amphibians are threatened with extinction. An estimated 10% of insects are also at risk.

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY** The loss of biodiversity is not just a problem for nature lovers. Human life is inextricably linked with natural ecosystems, with three-quarters of crops dependent on animal pollination. Some \$577 billion worth of crops could be lost each year if pollinators were to die out, and 23% of land is already less productive as a result of degradation. The destruction of coastal habitats has heightened flood and hurricane risks for 100 million to 300 million people. "We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide," said Robert Watson, one of the report's authors.

**SAVING EARTH** Scientists say species loss and climate change can only be tackled with "transformative" measures, including an overhaul of international trade, massive investment in forests and green energy, and changes to individual behavior, like consuming less meat. But while experts say we need a paradigm shift, policymakers remain divided over radical environmental action. If we can't agree on a plan fast, the future looks bleak for all. —CIARA NUGENT

#### NEWS TICKER

### Iran-U.S. tensions escalate

Iran's President on May 8 said his country will **stop complying with parts of the Iranian nuclear deal** and start enriching more uranium if other countries do not ease sanctions in 60 days. The move came days after the U.S. said it was sending an aircraft-carrier group and bombers to the region over unspecified Iranian threats.

### Cease-fire reached after Gaza fighting

On May 6, **Palestinian militants said a cease-fire with Israel had been agreed upon** following a flare-up of violence in the Gaza Strip that left at least 25 Palestinians and four Israelis dead. The fighting had escalated three days earlier, after Gaza-based militants shot at Israeli soldiers and Israeli forces killed four Palestinians.

### Democrats hold AG Barr in contempt

After President Trump asserted executive privilege over the Mueller report on May 8, the House Judiciary Committee voted along party lines to **recommend that the House hold Attorney General William Barr in contempt** for refusing to provide the unredacted document.





Reuters journalists Kyaw Soe Oo, left, and Wa Lone reunited with their families

## THE GUARDIANS

### Myanmar's media martyrs freed

By Feliz Solomon

THE TWO FIGURES WERE FIRST SPOTTED by a photographer who arrived early on the scene, with a telephoto lens through the gates of a Yangon prison on May 7. One man's signature thick-rimmed glasses confirmed it: the award-winning Reuters journalists whose arrest had become a global cause were finally free.

In the 511 days since their arrest, Burmese reporters Wa Lone, 33, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 29, became two of the world's most visible symbols of the fight to protect press freedom. Last year, TIME included them among the "Guardians" named Person of the Year for their role in "the war on truth." In April, they were awarded a Pulitzer Prize for the work that landed them in jail.

There was little ambiguity about what happened to these two young reporters who dared to expose atrocities committed by Myanmar's notorious military. They were set up, charged with possessing "official secrets" and sentenced to seven years in prison after a trial that was broadly considered a farce. On May 7, they were freed by a pardon from President Win Myint.



"I'm really happy and excited to see my family and my colleagues," Wa Lone said in brief remarks outside the prison gates. "I can't wait to go to my newsroom." Photos and videos of the reporters' reunions with their wives and young daughters went viral. One captured the first time Wa Lone held his infant daughter as a free man. His wife Pan Ei Mon discovered she was pregnant shortly after his arrest.

It's tempting to see the release of these reporters as a victory in the worsening global struggle between independent media outlets and the governments that wish to control and stifle them.

At least 251 journalists were jailed in 2018, one of the worst annual totals on record. But advocates for the two men say this is a battle won, not the war. It's generally agreed that the Myanmar government would not have freed them on its own; it took 18 months of sustained, concerted

international pressure to get two innocent men out of prison, while dozens of other journalists there and across Asia remain behind bars. "I don't think the government of Myanmar deserves any credit for this; they're still the villains," says Phil Robertson, deputy director of the Asia division for Human Rights Watch. "But what it shows is that if you can generate enough international pressure, you can actually win the day." □

## NEWS TICKER

### Investigators probe after Aeroflot crash

Russian investigators are considering pilot error as a potential cause of the **May 5 crash that killed 41 out of 78 people on an Aeroflot plane** at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport. The Superjet burst into flames in an emergency landing 30 minutes after takeoff.

### Georgia enacts abortion restriction

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp on May 7 signed a controversial bill that **outlaws most abortions after a doctor can detect what some call a "fetal heartbeat,"**

which can be as early as six weeks into pregnancy. The law is one of the most restrictive in the nation and is expected to face legal challenges.

### South Asia cyclone kills dozens

A rare summer cyclone, with winds of 155 m.p.h., **hit India and Bangladesh** in early May. More than 2 million people living in the storm's path were evacuated, but Cyclone Fani still left at least 34 people dead in India—where it was categorized as "extremely severe"—and 15 in Bangladesh.





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## GOOD QUESTION

### Can states require people to work to get Medicaid?

AFTER CASEY COPELAND GOT SOBER, HE started turning his life around. The 37-year-old Arkansan began volunteering at homelessness and recovery organizations to gain experience to become a drug and alcohol counselor. And he signed up for Medicaid.

“When you get hooked on drugs like I did, you lose everything,” Copeland says. “But now that you’ve got [Medicaid] you can go take care of yourself.”

In late January, however, Copeland unexpectedly received a letter saying his health insurance had been canceled. The reason? He had failed to properly document the hours he spent volunteering and searching for work that month. Because of an Arkansas policy approved by the Trump Administration, he would be cut off for the rest of the year from the state and federal insurance program, which is meant to help needy Americans get health care.

More than 18,000 others also lost their insurance in the Arkansas policy’s first seven months, and more were at risk till a judge struck down the rule, along with a similar one in Kentucky, in March. The Trump Administration, which touted Medicaid work requirements but left it to the states to implement them, vowed to push ahead—but advocates in New Hampshire are now pushing right back.

On May 2, the New Hampshire House gave preliminary approval to a bill that would limit the impact of their state’s

requirement, which is set to take effect in June, by expanding exemptions and adding a fail-safe that would stop the program if more than 500 people lose insurance because of it. The bill already passed in the state Senate, and if it clears the House it will head to Governor Chris Sununu.

Democratic state representatives said such a bill, if signed, would protect their state from the issues Arkansas experienced. Meanwhile, conservative supporters of the requirements say they help push the unemployed toward self-sufficiency by requiring that they work, volunteer, attend school or job-hunt for a certain number of hours each month in order to receive benefits. (President Trump’s support is a reversal, as he—unlike many Republicans—campaigns on the idea that he’d protect programs like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.) Those who have experienced the requirements say they often fall short of their stated goals, hurting recipients who are already trying to find work by adding a layer of bureaucratic uncertainty. “This is another blow to people who already feel forgotten and hopeless,” says Mandy Davis, director of a Little Rock homeless day shelter.

In the wake of the Arkansas ruling, New Hampshire isn’t alone in questioning whether this idea is a good one. Similar plans stalled in Idaho and Iowa this spring, and health advocacy groups are suing New Hampshire. But five other states could implement such programs soon, and six more are waiting on approval. While Copeland got his insurance restored, thousands of others must live with uncertainty as the government encourages states to figure out the answer. —ABIGAIL ABRAMS



## DIED

### Peter Mayhew

By Joonas Suotamo

FOR PEOPLE TO REMEMBER something, it needs to be unique. Peter Mayhew, who died April 30 at 74, made Chewbacca unique by being real—even though Chewie happens to live in space in a fantastical world. At the character’s core is the warmth, loyalty and friendship that Peter brought to *Star Wars*, so he created something that we will always remember.

I first met Peter two days before we started filming *The Force Awakens*, as I prepared to take over that role. He generously told stories and encouraged me; to this day, no one knows which scenes I did and which he did for that movie, except the crew. Later, we’d watch old footage of Peter as Chewbacca, and he would explain why he did the things we see in those legendary scenes. I appreciated that so much, because it was a delicate situation stepping into his shoes to become the character he had been.

I knew that it was bittersweet for him to let go of the role, but I assured him that all I ever do is honor his performance, and Chewbacca himself, which is honoring Peter too.

Suotamo is an actor

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Back to reality

In a recent episode of *Game of Thrones*, a disposable coffee cup (left) made its way into a banquet scene. Here, other flubs that have fractured an onscreen fantasy. —Madeline Roache



#### MOTOR MISTAKES

In the 2001 *Lord of the Rings* installment *The Fellowship of the Ring*, viewers could spot a car cruising past in the distance as hobbits Sam and Frodo walk through an otherwise tranquil field in Middle-earth.

#### GAS GOOF

In Ridley Scott’s 2000 movie *Gladiator*, set in ancient Rome, a horse-drawn chariot flips over during battle—only to reveal what looks like a steel gas cylinder, invented in the 1800s.

#### BIN BLUNDER

As a satellite technician played by Jeff Goldblum rants about the fate of the dying earth in 1996’s *Independence Day*, he kicks over a trash can clearly labeled ART DEPT—although the scene is set in a military lab.



**DIED****Rachel Held Evans****By Jen Hatmaker**

THERE IS A WILDERNESS space in which misfits who flummox the Christian status quo gather. That wilderness has lost a hero—one who challenged the hierarchy behind the city walls, the patriarchy under the steeples. She insisted women, people of color, the LGBTQ community and the poor were the real elders of the church. A better ally didn't exist. She was Rachel Held Evans, prophet and preacher, author and friend, generous beyond all comprehension.

When she died on May 4, at the shocking age of 37, the Twitter hashtag #becauseofRHE became a different kind of gathering place, for stories of outcasts she welcomed back in, doubters she comforted, friends she celebrated, careers she launched, critics she challenged—every last one a witness to her rare legacy.

Our community believes Rachel received but one welcome as she entered eternity: “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into your rest.”

**Hatmaker** is a speaker and best-selling author



Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex—alongside Meghan, Duchess of Sussex—holds newborn son Archie in St. George's Hall at Windsor Castle on May 8

**BORN****Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor**  
*A son for the Sussexes*

HE WAS A LITTLE OVERDUE, AND HIS PARENTS KEPT THE WORLD guessing until the very last minute too. But in the early hours of May 6, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex—Prince Harry and Meghan Markle—welcomed their first son, who becomes seventh in line to the British throne and the Queen's eighth great-grandchild.

Eschewing the immediate media frenzy that has surrounded recent royal arrivals, the couple decided to announce the news on their own terms, breaking with convention as they've often done. When the Duke called the birth “the most amazing experience I could ever possibly imagine,” his visible excitement and exhaustion provided one more glimpse of his generation's more relatable royal family, of which his marriage has become a symbol. And when Markle told reporters she had “the two best guys in the world” in their first public appearance as a trio, it was at Windsor Castle rather than a hospital—which, for them, is like inviting the press home.

The baby is also the first known mixed-race U.K. royal of our age, representative of a nation where multiracial people are the fastest-growing ethnic group. This newest member of “The Firm” is unlikely ever to sit on the throne, but his power is already clear: he sets the precedent for a modern monarchy some never imagined possible.

—SUYIN HAYNES

**CANCELED**

A trip to New York City, by embattled **Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro**, on May 4 after backlash prompted sponsors to pull out of the gala he had planned to attend.

**BANNED**

Seven Facebook accounts belonging to “dangerous individuals and organizations,” including **Alex Jones and Louis Farrakhan**, by the social-media company on May 2.

**REVEALED**

That **Sandra Bland**, a black woman who died in a Texas jail after a controversial 2015 traffic stop, recorded the encounter on her phone, by a local news station on May 6. The video raises new questions about her death.

**TESTED**  
**Multiple rocket launchers,**

by North Korea on May 4, in the country's first launch since 2017. North Korea said Kim Jong Un personally supervised the test.

**REFUSED**

A request from House Democrats to **release President Donald Trump's tax returns**, by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, on May 6. The next day, the *New York Times* said it had obtained 10 years of Trump's tax information, which showed several years in which he lost more money than nearly any other individual taxpayer.



## Congresswoman **Elise Stefanik** has a plan to get more Republican women elected

By **Alana Abramson**

REPRESENTATIVE ELISE STEFANIK CAN PINPOINT the moment that crystallized the issue for her: It was the week after the midterm elections, and the newly elected members of the House of Representatives lined up for a photo. Representing the Democratic side of the aisle were more than 30 women. On the GOP side were two—Carol Miller of West Virginia and Young Kim of California.

Stefanik knew what could have been. “I recruited over 100 women,” she says, reflecting on her time as recruitment chair for the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC). But looking at the freshmen on the Capitol steps, she saw whom her party was welcoming in 2019: almost all white men. And within days, mail-in ballots showed that Kim had actually lost, bringing the grand total for House GOP freshmen women to one.

“That was a stark, stark wake-up call,” Stefanik says. She stood up at a meeting with her fellow House Republicans shortly after the election. “Take a look around,” she recalls telling them in the basement of the Capitol. “This is not reflective of the American public. And you need to do something about it.”

She wasn’t willing to wait. As we sit in her office on Capitol Hill, the topic is E-PAC, the political action committee she officially relaunched in January to focus solely on recruiting women and helping them win. Her initial aim was to raise \$100,000; as of April 1, according to a spokesperson, she had raised over \$285,000. Her office declined to provide a set number of women she intends to recruit beyond expressing a desire to exceed last cycle’s 100.

Stefanik’s determination is clear: Prominent among the mementos from her upstate New York district is a black and gold plaque. IT CAN BE DONE, it reads. It’s the same quote President Reagan kept on his desk in the Oval Office. “I can’t tell you how many times I am the only woman at a table,” she says. “I want more to have a seat at the table.”

**STEFANIK, 34**, rose to prominence in 2014, when she became the youngest woman ever elected to Congress, a feat since eclipsed by two arriving Democrats. But she never planned to make gender parity her project. “I wasn’t running because of a lack of women’s leadership,” she says. “I ran because, just in general, I felt the party needed a new voice, a new generation of leadership, and my

district needed someone more energetic to bring results.”

Raised in the greater Albany area, she became interested in a career in politics as an undergraduate at Harvard while working as a student liaison for John F. Kennedy adviser Ted Sorensen, who was a fellow there. Although they had different political views, the experience was formative enough for her to eschew the consulting and finance jobs most of her classmates were pursuing. Instead, she headed to Washington, where she worked as a policy adviser in the George W. Bush White House.

In 2012 she worked on Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign, managing the debate preparation of his vice-presidential pick, Paul Ryan. At the time, Ryan was a Congressman in his early 40s who, after being elected at 29, had ascended the party ranks to chair the House Budget Committee. “It really struck me that as a young person, as a rank-and-file member of Congress who was elected in his late 20s, he was able to shape a lot of the national discourse because he had the courage to put forth new ideas,” she says. “He talked about issues like debt from a generational perspective.” Her work with Ryan made her confident that she too could offer a different way of thinking, and she moved back to New York to run in the 21st District.

In the tough primary that followed, she had support from Ryan as well as female Republicans she now considers mentors, like Representative Ann Wagner and then Representative Diane Black. She also benefited from roughly \$1 million in funding from American Crossroads, the super PAC backed by former George W. Bush adviser Karl Rove. But she says many members of Congress, including the NRCC leadership, were “tepid” about her candidacy. “There was a knee-jerk reaction that I didn’t fit the mold of a typical congressional candidate,” she says. She won anyway.

For her first two terms, Stefanik mostly kept her head down, forgoing national media appearances and focusing primarily on legislative priorities that would directly benefit her district. Although she’s bucked her party several times on policy, most notably on tax reform and climate change, in recent

### STEFANIK QUICK FACTS

#### Good sport

Stefanik wrote her college-admission essay about skiing with her dad on Sundays.

#### Going for gold

A replica of Miracle on Ice hockey star Mike Eruzione’s jersey hangs in her office. His number, 21, is that of her district, which includes Lake Placid.

#### Warm welcome

Stefanik wrote an open letter offering advice to Democrats Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Abby Finkenauer, the new youngest Congresswomen.





months she seems even less willing to accept the status quo. When Representative Tom Emmer, who now chairs the NRCC, said she would be making a mistake endorsing candidates in the primaries—something the NRCC pointedly does not do—but that she could do what she wanted, she fired back with a tweet containing four siren emojis: “But NEWSFLASH I wasn’t asking for permission.”

The two are now on good terms, she says, and Emmer appeared onstage for her PAC’s kickoff event. “When Elise talks, people listen,” says Representative Susan Brooks, the new NRCC recruitment chair. Asked if the party would be focused on increasing diversity if not for Stefanik, Brooks pauses and chuckles. “She did light the fire,” she says. “We might have studied it longer, reflected longer, griped about it longer ... but she, quickly after we lost, stepped up.”

To usher more women into office, Stefanik plans to not only recruit them but also help them develop

**‘Take a look around. This is not reflective of the American public.’**

ELISE STEFANIK, on what she told her caucus after the midterms

into viable candidates. She’s laid out a set of metrics they must meet to receive the PAC’s support, like reaching a fundraising threshold and building a basic campaign infrastructure. Although Stefanik won’t announce her first slate until the fall, her spokesperson said the PAC has given the maximum allowable contribution to Kim, who is running again, as well as Nicole Malliotakis in New York, Karen Handel in Georgia and Joan Perry in North Carolina. Being a Republican woman seeking a House seat isn’t enough, Stefanik says. She’s looking for “women we can help get across the finish line.”

She’s heard the criticism: Isn’t she engaging in the identity politics that conservatives so often object to? “That’s a pushback I’m getting,” she says. “I think *identity politics* is a very outdated term.” As she explains it, she just wants elected officials to better reflect the voters. “I think the Democrats were strategic in putting up district-specific candidates that would resonate in different parts of the country, whether it’s urban areas, whether it’s people that have interesting narratives with a national-security background or interesting perspectives as working mothers,” she says. “We need to recognize we should be doing that as well.”

She’s not calling for a reassessment of the party’s principles. She simply believes that female officials, whether from “ruby red” or swing districts, can bring a fresh perspective to tackling the issues affecting American families and women specifically. She points to the gender pay gap as one example. Democrats, she says, have put forward the Paycheck Fairness Act for decades. But the day before we spoke, she proposed her own plan to combat the problem: the Wage Equity Act, which attempts to balance the interests of businesses and employees. “It’s not a surprise that came from a female member who wanted to think differently about how we [fix] this problem,” she says.

Stefanik knows it will likely take time to see a real shift in the breakdown of her party’s Representatives. But she doesn’t intend to shy away from the challenge. If she does her job right, the next freshman class will look very different. □



## Going without

Driving the political battle for control of Venezuela is the nearly apocalyptic collapse of the country's economy. Five years into the man-made crisis, Venezuelans like Miguel Blanco—seen here in his home in a poor neighborhood of Maracaibo with his mother and a community activist—have been hit hard by nationwide shortages of both medicine and food. Blanco, 28, who has a neurological condition, weighs just 66 lb. According to the NGO Caritas, in December 2018 the average Venezuelan family would have needed the equivalent of 23 minimum-wage salaries to cover basic food needs.

*Photograph by Alvaro Ybarra Zavala—Getty Images Reportage*

► For more on this story, with reporting by Jorge Benezra, visit [time.com/maracaibo](https://time.com/maracaibo)









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# The View

PARENTING

## LOVE YOUR SPOUSE MORE

By Belinda Luscombe

Parents' love for their children can make them do peculiar things. Like staying up until 1 a.m. gluing glitter on a second-grade class project. Or driving 40 miles to deliver a single soccer cleat. Or, perhaps, bribing their teenagers' way into a fancy college. But one of the weirdest things parents do is love their children more than their partners. ▶

INSIDE

UNCONVENTIONAL  
COMMENCEMENT ADVICE

A STRONGER PLAN FOR STRIKING  
BACK AGAINST RUSSIA

HOW A PRICIER BURGER COULD  
COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE



# TheView Opener

Before you call child services, let me be clear: Of course you have to love your kids. Of course you have to put their needs first. But doing so is also a no-brainer. Children, with their urgent and often tricky-to-ascertain needs, easily attract devotion. Spouses don't need to be fed and dressed or have their tears dried and are nowhere near as cute. Loving your kids is like going to school—you don't really have a choice. Loving your spouse is like going to college—it's up to you to show up and participate.

So why do the harder work for the less adorable, more capable being in your life?

One reason, actually, is for the kids. Research strongly suggests that children whose parents love each other are much happier and more secure than those raised in a loveless environment. They have a model of not just what a relationship looks like but also of how people should treat each other.

Diary studies, in which parents log their day's activities each evening, have shown that mishandled tensions between a couple tend to spill over into parents' interactions with their kids, especially for fathers. Children whose parents are often hostile to each other blame themselves for the fighting and do worse at school, other research has found. In fact, a 2014 survey of 40,000 U.K. households revealed that adolescents were happiest overall when their mothers were happy with their relationships with their male partners. And this is for parents who stay together; the outcomes for kids of divorce—even in the days of conscious uncoupling—are, generally, darker. One of the best things you can do for your kids is love the heck out of your spouse.

**IF WE EVER KNEW THIS**, we have forgotten. When Pew Research asked young people in 2010 whether kids or a good marriage was more important for a happy life, kids won by a margin three times as big as when researchers asked the previous generation in 1997. But betting all your joy on offspring is a treacherously

short-term strategy. Cuddly toddlers turn into teenagers, who greet any public display of warmth with revulsion, suspicion or sullenness. Then they leave. Grown children do not want to be the object of all your affection or the main repository for all your dreams, just as you never really wanted to hear their full toddler recaps of *PAW Patrol*. If you've done your job as parents, one day your home is mostly going to hold you, your partner and devices for sending your kids messages that they then ignore.

Parents can get so invested in the enterprise of child rearing, especially in these anxious helicoptery times, that it moves from a task they're undertaking as a team to the sole point of the team's

existence. Some therapists say this is what's behind the doubling of the divorce rate among folks over 50 and tripling among those over 65 in the past 25 years: it's an empty-nest split.

Gerontologist Karl Pillemer of Cornell University, who interviewed

700 couples for his 2015 book *30 Lessons for Loving*, says one of his biggest discoveries was how dangerous "the middle-aged blur" of kids and activities and work was to people's relationships. "It was amazing how few of them could remember a time they had spent alone with their partner—it was what they'd given up," he told me. "Over and over again people come back to consciousness at 50 or 55 and can't go to a restaurant and have a conversation."

The only way to prevent this sad metamorphosis is to remember that the kids are not the reason you got together; they're a very absorbing project you have undertaken with each other, like a three-dimensional, moving jigsaw puzzle that talks back and leaves its underwear in the bathroom. You don't want to focus on it so much that you can no longer figure out each other.

*This essay is adapted from the forthcoming book Marriageology: The Art and Science of Staying Together*

## ADVICE

### Why grads shouldn't follow their passion

People who speak at universities, especially at commencement, who tell you to follow your passion—or my favorite, to "never give up"—are already rich. And most got there by starting waste-treatment plants after failing at five other ventures. That is, they knew when to give up.

Your job is to find something you're good at and, after 10,000 hours of practice, get great at it. The emotional and economic rewards that accompany being great at something will make you passionate about whatever that something is. Nobody starts their career passionate about tax law. But great tax lawyers are passionate about colleagues who admire them, creating economic security for their families and marrying someone more impressive than they are.

—Scott Galloway, a professor at NYU's Stern School of Business and the author of *The Algebra of Happiness*, from which this is excerpted



ILLUSTRATION BY DAN PAGE FOR TIME; CAP: GETTY IMAGES





◀ Putin “sort of smiled” about the Mueller report’s findings during a phone call, Trump said

## WORLD

### The retaliation Russia deserves

By James Stavridis



THE POLITICAL DRAMA stemming from the Mueller report has overwhelmed the attention given to the threat named in its very title: “Russian interference.”

America suffered a direct attack on our democracy—and we’ve responded with little beyond symbolic gestures toward the perpetrator.

Yes, Congress passed limited sanctions against Russia in summer 2017. And Trump did issue an Executive Order in September mandating investigations after every election and the imposition of “appropriate sanctions” if a foreign entity interfered. But these measures do not strike a senior enough group of Russians. They will not for a moment make Vladimir Putin pause.

Two pairs of Senators have reintroduced legislation that would demand quicker investigations and stricter sanctions than Trump’s order, particularly on Russian banks and energy companies. But the U.S. should not limit itself to hampering Russian businesses. It should also consider further sanctions on public entities—and even key leaders in Russia, including Putin. This could include depleting their access to such funds or sanctioning any global financial institution that deals with those assets. Taking such steps against the leader

of a nation with a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council and his most senior team would be unprecedented—but so was the attack against us in 2016.

There are more options. The U.S. can support, in both overt and covert ways, individuals and groups in Russia that are seeking to support democracy. It could reveal the details of high-ranking Russians’ personal financial arrangements abroad. We can impose travel restrictions more broadly on Russian citizens who seek to come here. Or we could reduce our willingness to cooperate in other Russian initiatives globally, from reconstruction in Syria to price support for oil.

Lastly, in addition to securing our election systems and educating our children about how to determine what information online is true, Congress should also match the drive for hearings about the President’s political actions with deeper explorations of exactly what Russia did. While the Mueller report began that process, there are more layers to pursue that would help determine what response is most appropriate—while also showcasing a fuller extent of what happened. A public forewarned is far less likely to be fooled in a future attack.

*Admiral Stavridis (ret.) was the 16th Supreme Allied Commander for NATO and is an operating executive at the Carlyle Group*

## SHORT READS

► Highlights from stories on [time.com/ideas](https://time.com/ideas)

### Knocking out knocked up

“Common phrases we use to describe [pregnancy]—in all its glory and anxiety, all its pain and productivity—are underwhelming”

and sometimes rooted in sexism, writes TIME’s Katy Steinmetz. Her solution? “Let women reimagine the language themselves.”

### All the President’s businesses

“Contradicting its entire history, the Department [of Justice] adopted Trump’s lawyers’ argument” on emoluments, explains Washington University law professor Kathleen Clark. **Now, Clark says, a federal official who owns a company can effectively “accept unlimited amounts of money from foreign governments.”**

### Hamburger helper

In the 1800s, the costs of producing meat were forced on ranchers and farmers—**creating a culture of price cutting that harms the world,** writes Joshua Specht, author of *Red Meat Republic*. “There are very real ways to mitigate the effects of beef production on climate change,” Specht writes, “but they will raise costs.”





*Warren on the campaign trail on May 3 in Iowa, where she's hired dozens of paid staff to compete in the first caucus state*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
KRISTA SCHLUETER  
FOR TIME





20<sup>✓</sup>20

# ELIZABETH WARREN HAS A PLAN FOR THAT

**The 2020 candidate is running a populist campaign built on dramatic ideas. Is it enough?**

**BY HALEY SWEETLAND EDWARDS**



## Voters encountering Elizabeth Warren on the presidential campaign trail these days often seem surprised. After a packed gathering at an elementary school in Concord, N.H., in April, a 40-something woman told me she had expected Warren to be more like Hillary Clinton but found them miles apart.

A college student who caught Warren's speech in Hanover said he was perplexed to learn that a woman once described by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's political director as a "threat to free enterprise" in fact believes in entrepreneurship and markets. And at an event in a Portsmouth high school cafeteria, a retired teacher told me he'd heard Warren was a "Ted Cruz-like partisan" but instead found her charming. "She seems like a real doll," he shrugged. "Can I say that?"

Warren first rose to fame for her withering interrogations of miscreant bankers and evasive government officials during the financial crisis 10 years ago. Since then, powerful critics in the Republican Party, as well as her own, have painted her as too liberal, too divisive, too wonky, too "strident"—that freighted euphemism so often applied to assertive women. So when I sat down with the Massachusetts Senator on a recent Tuesday, in a windowless office in Washington, I shared those voters' surprise.

As we spoke, Warren danced in her seat, talked effusively about her family and offered a series of funny extended political metaphors borrowed from HBO's *Game of Thrones*. At one point, as I struggled to formulate a question, she intuited what I was trying to ask and, conveying her readiness, extended her hands, locked her elbows and began gently flapping her arms like a bird preparing to take off in high winds.

"O.K., O.K., I can answer this," she said.

Which might as well be a motto for Warren's presidential campaign. She has set herself apart in a Democratic field of more than 20 candidates by offering more than a dozen complex policy proposals designed to address an array of problems, from unaffordable housing and child care to the overwhelming burden of student debt. Her anticorruption initiative would target the Washington swamp, and her anti-trust measures would transform Silicon Valley. On May 8 she unveiled a \$100 billion plan to fight the opioid crisis. This flurry of white papers, often rendered in fine detail, appears to suggest a technocratic approach to governing. But in fact,



▲  
Warren  
breaks  
for lunch  
between  
campaign  
events at the  
Stomping  
Grounds  
Cafe in  
Ames, Iowa

her vision, taken as a whole, is closer to a populist political revolution.

Warren's policy proposals have become her brand. On the campaign trail, her off-the-cuff phrase "I have a plan for that!" became so ubiquitous that it morphed into a viral applause line; in Iowa, supporters printed the accidental slogan on T-shirts. Her campaign, staffers say, is built on the conviction that voters want substance, not theatrics, and will throw in for the candidate who puts forth serious ideas to create change.

It's an audacious bet in the Donald Trump era. Voters tend to tell pollsters they prioritize policy over personality. But they said that in 2016 too, when Clinton's detailed agenda was no match for Trump's simple slogans and schoolyard nicknames. As her Democratic competitors offer enticing promises largely devoid of specifics, Warren insists on talking nuts





and bolts. In her stump speech, she describes the mechanics of a tax that would fund her universal child-care plan, to pick just one example among many.

Warren's investment in substance over style is not her only gamble. Over the past few months, she has fired her finance director, eschewed high-dollar donors and hired as much as 10 times as many staffers in early voting states as most of her competitors. While others focus on big money and flashy rallies, she's building a campaign designed to maximize the amount of time she spends in living rooms and community centers talking about what she would do as President.

It's not clear whether these bets will pay off. What she's proposing is a return to a bygone economic model that hasn't existed for at least a generation—a tough sell among even staunch members of her own party. And while she has emerged as

a serious contender for the Democratic nomination, she still trails front runner Joe Biden by a wide margin in both national polls and the latest surveys of the first four primary states. She doesn't have the die-hard fan base that Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders built in 2016, and her campaign may be haunted by the specter of Clinton's failure. Many voters who like Warren worry about nominating a wonky, blond woman four years after another wonky blond woman lost to Trump. "People are saying, if it takes a white dude to get this guy out of office, so be it," says Kelly Whitman, a Pennsylvania voter who heard Warren speak in New Hampshire.

But the first votes in the 2020 primaries will not be cast for nine months. In the meantime, Warren, 69, is committed to running what she describes as "a different kind of campaign"—offering a more unapologetically liberal agenda than any

presidential candidate in recent memory. "I want to fix the systems in this country so they work for Americans, not just for giant corporations or Big Pharma or the Goldman Sachs guys," she says. "That's not just my political career. That my whole life's work."

**I FIRST MET WARREN** in mid-April, in the basement of a New Hampshire hotel. She and her family had just wolfed down a lunch of Mexican takeout; a side table was littered with guacamole containers, and her golden retriever, Bailey, sat nearby, panting amiably. I asked if she thought she could win that elusive demographic: white, working-class voters who supported Barack Obama in 2008 and President Trump in 2016. She didn't miss a beat. "Those are my people," she said, and then repeated it, sitting stick-straight in her chair. "Those are my people."

Warren, née Elizabeth Herring, was born in 1949 into a lower-middle-class family in Oklahoma City. All three of her brothers were in the military; two are Republicans. Warren herself was a registered Republican until the mid-1990s, although she says she was not very political at that time. Her family's financial struggles mirrored those of many alienated voters in middle-class America today—a visceral experience that she says has defined and informed her politics.

When she was a child, Warren's father sold everything from carpeting to fencing and housewares. In the early 1960s, he suffered a heart attack and could no longer work, plunging the family into crisis. Warren recalls learning the word *foreclosure* by listening to her parents' hushed conversations after bedtime. In an effort to keep the family home, Warren's mother got a minimum-wage job at a nearby Sears. Warren remembers her walking to work in the same nice dress she wore to weddings and graduations.

Warren also remembers her own rocky path through young adulthood. When she was 19, she dropped out of George Washington University, where she had earned a debate scholarship, when she was still a teenager, to marry her first husband, Jim Warren, with whom she had her two children. During those early years, Warren recalls struggling to balance her own ambitions to finish college and go to law school with being a young wife and



mother. She juggled classes and child care while following her husband's career as a NASA engineer, which took them zigzagging from Texas to New Jersey and back again. She remembers getting offered her first job, as a special-needs teacher in Houston, while frying pork chops for dinner "and trying not to trip over crayons." Later, just days before she was set to begin classes at Rutgers Law School in Newark, N.J., she recalls potty-training her not-yet-2-year-old daughter "in a panic" because the only day care she could find would not accept kids in diapers. "I'm here today thanks to three bags of M&Ms and a compliant toddler," she told a New Hampshire audience, to appreciative chuckles.

After graduating and passing the bar, Warren again followed her husband's career back to Texas, where she became a professor at the University of Houston Law Center. (She later divorced Warren and met her current husband, Bruce Mann, a fellow Harvard professor, to whom she has been married for almost 39 years.) It was during this period that she started her academic research into why American families file bankruptcy. She began the study expecting to discover that those reneging on their debts had made bad choices or had moral failings, she says. Instead, she found that they were "like you and me or our neighbors. They got into trouble because of a medical emergency or a string of bad luck."

By her own telling, Warren's personal story is littered with similar close calls and almost failures, which she survived thanks to a supportive family and good government. "I came within a hair's breadth of getting completely knocked off the track," she says. The reason her parents were able to keep their home when she was a girl is that at the time, a minimum-wage retail job paid enough to cover the mortgage, she says. The reason she was able to keep her job as a law professor in Houston is that her aunt offered to watch her kids. A minimum-wage job today "can't keep a mama and a baby out of poverty, and that's wrong," she says. She's proposing universal child care and pre-K for every working parent, she says, because "not everyone has an Aunt Bee." How many smart women were unable to pursue careers because they couldn't secure child care? she asks. How many hardworking people didn't advance because they couldn't

## ON THE AGENDA

Warren's campaign has rolled out more than a dozen sweeping policy proposals that make up the candidate's progressive vision for America. Here are some of her biggest ideas.

### **AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE**

A \$700 billion federal investment would support a network of locally run child-care centers. Families would pay on a sliding scale, depending on income, with the neediest receiving free care.

### **STUDENT-DEBT RELIEF**

The \$1.25 trillion plan would offer up to \$50,000 in student-loan cancellation to those with household incomes of less than \$100,000. It would also eliminate tuition at two- and four-year public colleges.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

A \$500 billion federal outlay would help build, preserve and rehab millions of housing units for lower-income families. It would be paid for by taxing inherited wealth above \$7 million.

### **BREAK UP BIG TECH**

Large tech companies would be prevented from using their platforms to promote or sell their own products. The plan would also help prevent mergers that undermine market competition.

### **BREAK UP BIG AG**

The plan would ban anti-competitive agribusiness practices. It would also limit PRODUCT OF USA labels to livestock raised and slaughtered in the country.

afford the loans to cover their educations? "No one," she says, "makes it alone."

Warren remains close to her family, most of whom still live in Oklahoma, and a Plains accent still inflects her speech. But her personal story also makes for useful politics. As a veteran Democratic strategist observes, "If she's Oklahoma Elizabeth Warren, she'll win. If she's Harvard Elizabeth Warren, she'll lose."

The Oklahoma Warren is not an act, says Heather Campion, an executive and women's leadership consultant long involved in Massachusetts and national politics, who has known Warren since the mid-2000s. "Truly, at heart, she's a working-class person," Campion says. "She's not a Harvard professor, either culturally or socially, and because of that, she understands very deeply what it's like to be a working American today. She has had her finger on the pulse of what's happening in this country long before anyone else did."

But Warren's political rivals have often succeeded at weaponizing her Harvard side. In her first campaign for U.S. Senate in 2012, her opponent, Republican incumbent Scott Brown, called her "the professor" and lambasted her "elitist attitude." Trump has nicknamed Warren Pocahontas, in a nod to her decision to identify herself as a Native American while she was a law professor, including at Harvard. Critics have alleged that her claim to minority status was an attempt to boost her career. (Warren has apologized for the claim, and an investigation by the *Boston Globe* found she did not benefit from it professionally.)

Warren's first foray into Washington politics didn't come until the late 1990s, when she came to D.C. to fight a bankruptcy bill she believed unfairly penalized families by making it more difficult to discharge credit-card and medical debts. As part of her effort to quash the legislation, she lobbied then First Lady Hillary Clinton, who ate a hamburger as Warren made her case. By the time the brief conversation was over, Clinton was sold: she persuaded her husband to pull support for the bill, and it died. It was Warren's first political victory—but a short-lived one. In 2005, the same piece of legislation again came up for a vote, and that time it passed.

The defeat marked the first time Warren locked horns with Biden, then



a Delaware Senator and now a top rival for the Democratic nomination. During a February 2005 hearing, the two went toe to toe: Biden, whose state hosts some of the biggest financial firms, took the credit-card companies' side, while Warren advocated on behalf of the families who she said had "been squeezed enough" by interest rates and fees. Biden was not swayed but ended the debate by acknowledging Warren's skills. "You are very good, professor," he said, according to a transcript. Biden voted for the bill both times.

The failure to stop the bankruptcy bill still rankles Warren. But it also helped shape her understanding of how Washington works, says Dennis Kelleher, president and CEO of Better Markets, a nonprofit financial-reform group. "People have no idea what it means to go up against the overwhelmingly powerful and connected financial industry, which will do almost everything to protect its businesses and profits," he says. Warren's battle scars from her own fight made her "tougher and smarter" and taught her to "take fight to the public," he says. It was a lesson Warren would use again soon.

**WARREN SAW** the financial crisis coming before almost anyone else. Throughout the early 2000s, she warned in articles, books and speeches that rising consumer debt, wage stagnation and spikes in the cost of housing, health care and education would pull the rug out from underneath the American economy. In September 2008, it finally happened: the financial markets crashed, plunging the world into the worst recession in a generation.

Weeks later, former Senate majority leader Harry Reid appointed Warren to chair the five-member congressional oversight panel charged with reporting on the effectiveness and transparency of the U.S. Treasury's Troubled Asset Relief Program, the centerpiece of the federal government's response to the crisis. In that role, Warren quickly won acclaim for grilling senior officials of both parties.

When then Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson repeatedly evaded the panel's scrutiny, Warren and her team created a chart listing every time he had been asked the same question and how he had answered it previously. Warren was no easier on Paulson's Democratic successor, Tim Geithner. In one

#### **EXECUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Senator's plan would charge a team of federal regulators with investigating financial crimes. It would also hold corporate executives criminally accountable for negligence that harms U.S. families.

#### **PROTECTING PUBLIC LANDS**

Warren has vowed to sign an Executive Order on her first day as President that would place a "total moratorium on all new fossil fuel leases including for drilling offshore and on public lands."

#### **MATERNAL HEALTH**

Insurers would pay health providers one flat rate for caring for a woman throughout her entire pregnancy rather than charging separately for each visit or procedure.

#### **GENERIC-DRUG PRICES**

The federal government would underwrite the manufacturing of certain prescription drugs, cap out-of-pocket prescription costs for families at \$500 per month and strengthen protections for people with private health insurance.

#### **OPIOID CRISIS**

Warren's plan would allocate \$100 billion over 10 years to curb drug addiction and overdoses and to expand access to treatment. It would be paid for by a 2% tax on household wealth that exceeds \$50 million.

#### **ACCOUNTABLE CAPITALISM**

Her proposal would require large corporations to obtain a new federal charter compelling executive boards to consider the interests of workers and communities, rather than just shareholders, in corporate decisions.

cringe-inducing moment, Warren asked Geithner why auto companies' creditors were asked to take huge losses during the crisis while taxpayers paid financial institutions' creditors in full. Geithner, fiddling with a pen, wobbled through a response before admitting that the Treasury was "forced to do things we would not ever want to do." Within months, Warren's interrogations became viral fodder for a furious public, transforming the obscure law professor into something of a populist folk hero, as well as a regular on Jon Stewart's *Daily Show*.

During the same period, Warren began working with former Democratic Congressman Barney Frank and former Democratic Senator Chris Dodd on what would become their signature legislation, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Warren's reputation as a bomb thrower preceded her, but Frank was impressed. "When we actually got into legislative drafting, she was unusually good for someone who wasn't involved with the political process," he says. Warren was committed to "tactical flexibility," Frank added, "ordering your priorities, fighting for the ones you think are most important" and being willing to compromise on the rest.

It's a characteristic that critics and fans alike often miss. Warren has introduced more substantial bipartisan legislation during her time in Congress than nearly all her rivals in the Democratic primary field, according to the nonpartisan website GovTrack, including Sanders, New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, California Senator Kamala Harris and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, who has touted his propensity for reaching across the aisle on the campaign trail. (Only Biden and Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar have introduced more.) Most recently, Warren collaborated with Republican Cory Gardner of Colorado on legislation pushing for state control of marijuana laws and with Republican Bill Cassidy of Louisiana on an effort to make colleges' graduation and employment data more transparent.

Her singular achievement in the wake of the financial crisis was persuading Congress to create a new watchdog agency, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), as part of the Dodd-Frank law. The goal of the CFPB was to protect and advocate for consumers against



*Warren holds a meet and greet with Iowa voters at a Mason City brewery on May 4*







sloppy, abusive or predatory financial firms. From the start, Warren's agency was controversial, in part because corporations staunchly opposed it. After its creation in 2010, the CFPB became one of the most feared watchdogs in Washington, forcing financial firms to pay back billions of dollars to consumers. In 2013, Ocwen Financial Corp. paid a \$2 billion penalty to underwater homeowners for engaging in what the agency called "deceptions and shortcuts in mortgage servicing." In 2018, Wells Fargo paid \$1 billion to borrowers with home and auto loans.

A 2017 poll by consumer-advocacy firms found that three-fourths of Americans, including 66% of Republicans and 77% of independents, supported the CFPB. Yet since 2017, the Trump Administration has worked to defang the agency. Its former acting director, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, who previously co-sponsored legislation to abolish the CFPB, ordered a hiring freeze, slow-rolled enforcement measures and stood in the way of new rules that would have restricted payday loans.

**AT A CAMPAIGN STOP** in Hanover, Warren takes the stage at a near run as Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down" booms in the background. If you were to watch a video of Warren on the trail with the sound off, you might be forgiven for thinking she was conducting a high-tempo aerobics video: when she speaks, she rocks and bounces onto her tiptoes and pounds the air with her fists, her tone veering between outrage and empathy as she describes the challenges facing the middle class. Just as her diagnosis of the problem reaches a crescendo, she takes a step back and performs a rhetorical swan dive into crystalline pools of policy: and here, she says, is how we fix it.

It's a two-step presentation that can sometimes feel like therapy to supporters. "They're happy that somebody is finally talking about it," Warren says. In the Washington Bubble, as she calls it, the conversation is tone-deaf. Investments are up, unemployment is down, and pundits are arguing over whether the good times are thanks to Obama or Trump. And while it's true that traditional measures of economic health, like GDP and stock prices, are indeed on the rise, many Americans inhabit a different reality: overworked,



underwater and feeling crushed by powers outside of their control. “She knows me. She knows my life conditions,” says Greta Shultz, a single mom from Massachusetts. “I don’t care if Beto’s jumping on counters or Biden’s the front runner. She’s the policy machine who can fix it.”

Warren’s solution involves taking on some of the biggest, most powerful political and economic institutions in the country: ending unlimited corporate campaign spending, rebooting antitrust laws, breaking up big tech and agricultural firms, and reforming lobbying. She describes a wall of interlocking gears, each connected to the others, forming the American economic and governmental machine. Beginning sometime around 1980, she says, those gears stopped fitting together and the machine stopped working for most Americans. “If we want to make real change in this country,” she says, “it’s got to be systemic change.”

The foundation for Warren’s social-policy programs are two new taxes, a corporate tax and what she calls an “ultra-millionaire” tax. The first is a 7% tax on businesses’ profits that exceed \$100 million in a year. The second is a 2% tax on household wealth that exceeds \$50 million annually. (The tax increases to 3% on anything over \$1 billion.) It would affect roughly the top one-tenth of the richest 1% of Americans. “You built a great business? You earned or inherited a lot of money? Great, keep most of it!” she says. “But by golly, pitch something back in.” Warren estimates that, together, these taxes would raise \$3.75 trillion over a decade—funds she would use to pay for many of her big social programs.

Some Republicans have been critical of Warren’s tax plan, and some tax experts have said it would be both difficult to implement and likely unconstitutional. Progressives too have been critical of some of the details of Warren’s proposals. Kevin Carey, director of New America’s education-policy program, argues that while Warren’s goal of providing free college is a good one, her plan is designed in a way that punishes states that currently do more to support students. Warren’s affordable-housing plan has also come under scrutiny for its reliance on incentivizing local governments to remove zoning restrictions.

Warren’s deeply liberal policies reflect

## ‘She knows me. She knows my life conditions. She’s the policy machine who can fix it.’

GRETA SHULTZ,  
a Massachusetts single mom

a larger political bet: that her vision for the future will endear her to a nation—and a Democratic Party—in the throes of a populist resurgence. Trump won in 2016 partly by harnessing anti-Wall Street language. His campaign featured ads lambasting then Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfein and pillorying Clinton as a stooge of Wall Street. Warren’s campaign wants to appeal to that sentiment.

**WHAT WARREN’S MANY PLANS** conspicuously lack is a detailed description of how she will change the politics that have stymied other populist efforts in the past. For starters, her own party has for decades embraced a neoliberalism that mostly shies away from big government programs. “It’s so clear now that that approach hasn’t worked. We’ve got to find a different path,” Warren says.

And then there’s Republicans. Passing any of Warren’s proposals would require more than just winning the presidency—a fact she acknowledges. “Yes, I want to win in 2020, but that’s not enough,” she told a crowd in Lebanon, N.H. “We have to, as Democrats, take back Congress, we’ve got to boost our seats in statehouses, we’ve got to take some governors’ mansions back.” Not since Lyndon Johnson and Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed stable Senate supermajorities, and a sympathetic Supreme Court, has such sweeping transformation been possible. For now, Warren’s answer is to double down on change—she has called for Trump’s impeachment—while appealing to brute optimism. “They say, ‘Impossible,’” she says. “I hear, ‘Try harder.’”

Her first step will be to convince voters that she can beat Trump. An April CNN poll found that 92% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said a candidate’s chances of beating Trump were “extremely” or “very important.” Biden’s perch atop the Democratic field

may be in large part a function of that conviction. An April Quinnipiac poll found that 56% of Democrats believed Biden was the candidate most likely to oust Trump; Sanders came in second, with 12%.

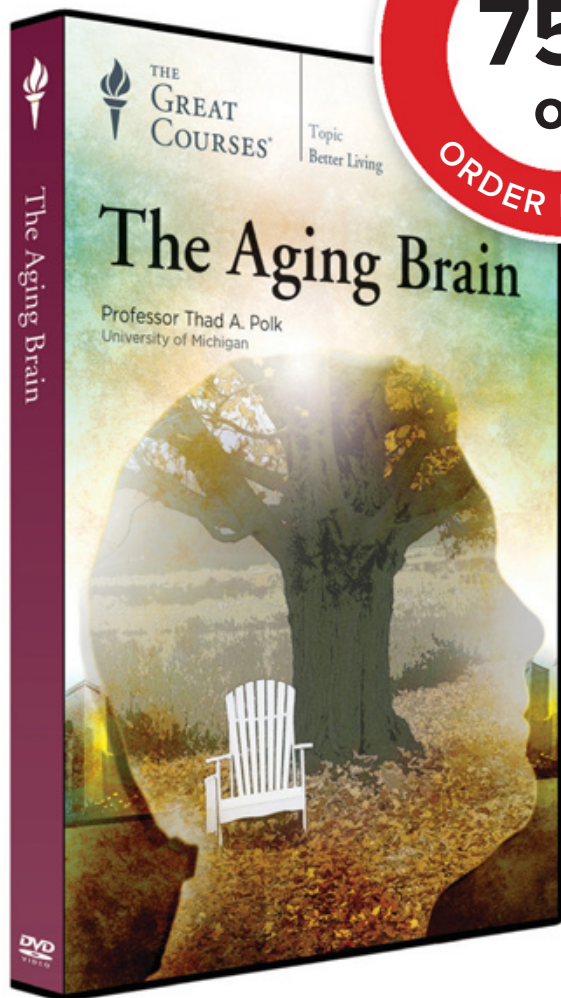
Some of the skepticism about Warren’s prospects arises from her own mistakes. Her decision in October to release her DNA analysis, which indicated she likely has a distant Native American relative, was widely panned. The move was an attempt to get ahead of a bad story; Boston shock jock Howie Carr announced in March 2018 that he had previously tried to get a DNA sample from Warren’s spit on a pen and encouraged his Boston *Herald* readers to snatch her water glass at a St. Patrick’s Day event so that he could test it. But Warren’s willingness to engage with that narrative, taking Trump’s bait in the process, came off as ham-handed. “The whole Native American thing was stupid,” says Massachusetts voter Cindy Walker. “She’s capable and competent to do the job, but she’s got these negatives.”

Warren has also tangled with powerful members of her own party. In early 2018, she attacked fellow Democrats, including several facing tight re-election campaigns, for backing legislation watering down Dodd-Frank. “That was a mistake,” Frank says. “I think she realized she misplayed that.” Warren also faces challenges beyond her control, including how some men react to outspoken women.

But campaign aides say they’re playing a long game. While Biden and Sanders may be better known, Democratic strategists unaffiliated with 2020 campaigns say Warren has proven appeal. In 2012, the Obama-Biden re-election campaign found that of all the Democratic campaign surrogates, Warren resonated most powerfully in focus groups. “The sense was that she gets it, she understands us, she is fighting for the right stuff,” says a former senior aide to the Obama-Biden re-election campaign. “She had an authority that no one else had.”

For now, Warren swats away questions about perceptions, polling numbers or electability. “I didn’t look in the mirror as a kid and think, Hey, there’s the next President of the United States,” she says. “But I know why I’m here. I have ideas for how we bring systemic change to this country. And we’re running out of time.”





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*Modi during a  
road show in  
Varanasi, in the  
northern state of  
Uttar Pradesh,  
on April 25*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADNAN ABIDI





World

# *The Modi Era*

As India goes to the  
polls, the world's biggest  
democracy is more divided  
than ever **By Aatish Taseer**



## Of the great democracies to fall to populism, India was the first.

In 2014, Narendra Modi, then the longtime chief minister of the western state of Gujarat and leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was elected to power by the greatest mandate the country had seen in 30 years. India until then had been ruled primarily by one party—the Congress, the party of Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru—for 54 of the 67 years that the country had been free.

Now, India is voting to determine if Modi and the BJP will continue to control its destiny. It is a massive seven-phase exercise spread over 5½ weeks in which the largest electorate on earth—some 900 million—goes to the polls. To understand the deeper promptings of this enormous expression of franchise—not just the politics, but the underlying cultural fissures—we need to go back to the first season of the Modi story. It is only then that we can see why the advent of Modi is at once an inevitability and a calamity for India. The country offers a unique glimpse into both the validity and the fantasy of populism. It forces us to reckon with how in India, as well as in societies as far apart as Turkey and Brazil, Britain and the U.S., populism has given voice to a sense of grievance among majorities that is too widespread to be ignored, while at the same time bringing into being a world that is neither more just, nor more appealing.

The story starts at independence. In 1947, British India was split in two. Pakistan was founded as a homeland for Indian Muslims. But India, under the leadership of its Cambridge-educated Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, chose not to be symmetrically Hindu. The country had a substantial Muslim population (then around 35 million, now more than 172 million), and the ideology Nehru bequeathed to the newly independent nation was secularism. This secularism was more than merely a separation between religion and state; in India, it means the equal treatment of all religions by the state, although to many of its critics, that could translate into Orwell's maxim of some being more equal than others. Indian Muslims were allowed to keep Shari'a-based family law, while Hindus were subject to the law of the land. Arcane practices—such as the man's right to divorce a woman by repudiating her three times and paying a minuscule compensation—were allowed for Indian Muslims, while Hindus were bound by reformed family law and often found their places of worship taken over by the Indian state. (Modi made the so-called Triple Talaq instant divorce a punishable



▲  
An Ikea customer in Hyderabad; Sardar Singh Jatav recovers after an attack by higher-caste Hindu men in September 2018

offense through an executive order in 2018.)

Nehru's political heirs, who ruled India for the great majority of those post-independence years, established a feudal dynasty, while outwardly proclaiming democratic norms and principles. India, under their rule, was clubbish, anglicized and fearful of the rabble at the gates. In May 2014 those gates were breached when the BJP, under Modi, won 282 of the 543 available seats in Parliament, reducing the Congress to 44 seats, a number so small that India's oldest party no longer even had the right to lead the opposition.

**POPULISTS COME IN TWO STRIPES:** those who are of the people they represent (Erdogan in Turkey, Bolsonaro in Brazil), and those who are merely exploiting the passions of those they are not actually part of (the champagne neo-fascists: the Brexiteers, Donald Trump, Imran Khan in Pakistan). Narendra Modi belongs very firmly to the first camp. He is the son of a tea seller, and his election was nothing short of a class revolt at the ballot box. It exposed what American historian Anne Applebaum has described as “unresolvable divisions between people who had previously not known that they disagreed with one another.” There had, of course, been political differences before, but what Modi's election revealed was a cultural chasm. It was no longer about left, or right, but something more fundamental.

The nation's most basic norms, such as the char-





acter of the Indian state, its founding fathers, the place of minorities and its institutions, from universities to corporate houses to the media, were shown to be severely distrusted. The cherished achievements of independent India—secularism, liberalism, a free press—came to be seen in the eyes of many as part of a grand conspiracy in which a deracinated Hindu elite, in cahoots with minorities from the monotheistic faiths, such as Christianity and Islam, maintained its dominion over India’s Hindu majority.

Modi’s victory was an expression of that distrust. He attacked once unassailable founding fathers, such as Nehru, then sacred state ideologies, such as Nehruvian secularism and socialism; he spoke of a “Congress-free” India; he demonstrated no desire to foster brotherly feeling between Hindus and Muslims. Most of all, his ascension showed that beneath the surface of what the elite had believed was a liberal syncretic culture, India was indeed a cauldron of religious nationalism, anti-Muslim sentiment and deep-seated caste bigotry. The country had a long history of politically instigated sectarian riots, most notably the killing of at least 2,733 Sikhs in the streets of Delhi after the 1984 assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. The Congress leadership,

though hardly blameless, was able, even through the selective profession of secular ideals, to separate itself from the actions of the mob. Modi, by his deafening silences after more recent atrocities, such as the killing of more than 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, in his home state of Gujarat in 2002, proved himself

a friend of the mob. He made one yearn for the hypocrisies of the past, for, as Aldous Huxley writes, at least “the political hypocrite admits the existence of values higher than those of immediate national, party or economic interest.” Modi, without offering an alternative moral compass, rubbished the standards India had, and made all moral judgment seem subject to conditions of class and culture warfare. The high ideals of the past have come under his reign to seem like nothing but the hollow affectations of an entrenched power elite. When, in 2019, Modi tweets, “You know what is my crime for them? That a person born to a poor family is challenging their Sultunate [sic],” he is trying to

resurrect the spirit of 2014, which was the spirit of revolution. *Them* is India’s English-speaking elite, as represented by the Congress party; *sultanate* is a dog whistle to suggest that all the heirs of foreign rule in India—the country had centuries of Muslim rule before the British took over in 1858—are working in

**Modi, by his  
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tandem to prevent the rise of a proud Hindu nation.

In 2014, Modi converted cultural anger into economic promise. He spoke of jobs and development. Taking a swipe at the socialist state, he famously said, “Government has no business being in business.” That election, though it is hard to believe now, was an election of hope. When the Delhi press tried to bait the Modi voter with questions about building a temple in Ayodhya, a place where Hindu nationalist mobs in 1992 had destroyed a 16th century mosque, said to stand at the birthplace of the Hindu epic hero Ram, they stoutly responded with: “Why are you talking to us of temples, when we are telling you that we’re voting for him because we want development.” *Sabka saath, sabka vikas*—“Together with all, development for all”—was Modi’s slogan in 2014.

As India votes this month, the irony of those words is not lost on anyone. Not only has Modi’s economic miracle failed to materialize, he has also helped create an atmosphere of poisonous religious nationalism in India. One of his young party men, Tejasvi Surya, put it baldly in a speech in March 2019, “If you are with Modi, you are with India. If you are not with Modi, then you are strengthening anti-India forces.” India’s Muslims, who make up some 14% of the population, have been subjected to episode after violent episode, in which Hindu mobs, often with what seems to be the state’s tacit support, have carried out a series of public lynchings in the name of the holy cow, that ready symbol of Hindu piety. Hardly a month goes by without the nation watching agog on their smartphones as yet another enraged Hindu mob falls upon a defenseless Muslim.

The most enduring image of Modi’s tenure is the sight of Mohammad Naeem in a blood-soaked undershirt in 2017, eyes white and enlarged, begging the mob for his life before he is beaten to death. The response of leadership in every instance is the same: virtual silence. Basic norms and civility have been so completely vitiated that Modi can no longer control the direction of the violence. Once hatred has been sanctioned, it is not always easy to isolate its target, and what the BJP has discovered to its dismay is that the same people who are willing to attack Muslims are only too willing to attack lower-caste Hindus as well. The party cannot afford to lose the lower-caste vote, but one of the ugliest incidents occurred in Modi’s home state of Gujarat, in July 2016, when upper-caste men stripped four lower-caste tanners, paraded them in the streets and beat them with iron rods for allegedly skinning a cow.

Modi’s record on women’s issues is spotty. On

the one hand, he made opportunity for women and their safety a key election issue (a 2018 report ranked the country the most dangerous place on earth for women); on the other hand, his attitude and that of his party men feels paternalistic. He caused outrage in 2015 when he said Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh’s Prime Minister, had a good record on terrorism, “despite being a woman”; Modi’s deputy, Amit Shah, speaks of women as having the status of deities, ever the refuge of the religious chauvinist who is only too happy to revere women into silence. Yet Modi also appointed a woman Defense Minister.

If these contradictions are part of the unevenness of a society assimilating Western freedoms, it must be said that under Modi minorities of every stripe—from liberals and lower castes to Muslims and Christians—have come under assault. Far from his promise of development for all, he has achieved a state in which Indians are increasingly obsessed

with their differences. If in 2014 he was able to exploit difference in order to create a climate of hope, in 2019 he is asking people to stave off their desperation by living for their differences alone. The incumbent may win again—the opposition, led by Rahul Gandhi, an unteachable mediocrity and a descendant of Nehru, is in disarray—but Modi will never again represent the myriad dreams and aspirations of 2014. Then he was a messiah, ushering in a future too bright to behold, one part Hindu renaissance, one part South Korea’s economic program. Now he is merely a politician who has failed to deliver, seeking re-election. Whatever else might be said about the election, hope is off the menu.

**He is asking  
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their  
differences  
alone**

**I COVERED** the 2014 election from the holy city of Varanasi, which Modi had chosen as his constituency, repurposing its power over the Hindu imagination, akin to that of Jerusalem, Rome or Mecca, to fit his politics of revival. That election split me in two: on the one hand, I knew, as someone of Muslim parentage (my father was a Pakistani Muslim) and a member of India’s English-speaking elite, that the country Modi would bring into being would have no place for me; on the other hand, I was in sympathy with Modi’s cultural diagnosis of what power looked and felt like in India. In the West, the charge that liberalism, or leftism, corresponds to the power of an entitled elite is relatively new and still contestable. In India, for decades to be left-wing or liberal was to belong to a monstrously privileged minority. Until recently, there was no equivalent group on the right, no New England Republicans, no old-fashioned Tories. It was easy to feel that being left-wing was the province of a privileged few who had



gone to university abroad, where they had picked up the latest political and intellectual fashions.

Modi in 2014 was able to make the cultural isolation of the Indian elite seem political—part of a foreign-led conspiracy to undermine the “real” India. He revealed that a powerful segment of the country was living in a bubble. It was an effective political tactic, but it also obscured the fact that “real” India was living in a bubble of its own. Nehru had always been clear: India was not going to become a modern country by being more authentically itself. It needed the West; it needed science and technology; it needed, above all, to embrace “the scientific temper” and to eschew the obscurantism and magic that was at the heart of its traditional life. Modi, inadvertently or deliberately, has created a bewildering mental atmosphere in which India now believes that the road to becoming South Korea runs through the glories of ancient India. In 2014 Modi suggested at a gathering of doctors and medical professionals in Mumbai that ancient Indians knew the secrets of genetic science and plastic surgery. “We worship Lord Ganesha,” he said of the Hindu deity. “There must have been some plastic surgeon at that time who got an elephant’s head on the body of a human being and began the practice of plastic surgery.”

He has in every field, from politics and economics to Indology itself, privileged authenticity over ability, leading India down the road to a profound anti-intellectualism. He appointed Swaminathan Gurumurthy, Hindu nationalist ideologue, to the board of the Reserve Bank of India—a man of whom the renowned Columbia economist Jagdish Bhagwati said, “If he’s an economist, I’m a Bharatanatyam dancer.” It was Gurumurthy who, in a quest to deal with the menace of “black money,” is thought to have advised Modi to put 86% of India’s banknotes out of commission overnight in 2016, causing huge economic havoc from which the country is yet to recover. Modi now finds himself seeking to hold power in a climate of febrile nationalism, with a platform whose themes have much more to do with national security and profiting from recent tensions between India and Pakistan than with economic growth.

In 2017, after winning state elections in Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state, which happens also to have its largest Muslim population, the BJP appointed a hate-mongering priest in robes of saffron, the color of Hindu nationalism, to run that state. Yogi Adityanath had not been the face of the campaign. If he was known at all, it was for vile rhetoric, here imploring crowds to kill a hundred Mus-

lims for every Hindu killed, there sharing the stage with a man who wanted to dig up the bodies of Muslim women and rape them. Modi has presided over a continuous assault on the grove of academe, where the unqualified and semiliterate have been encouraged to build their shanties. Academia in India was dogmatically left-wing, but rather than change its politics, Modi attacked the idea of qualification itself. From the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), which produced a roll call of politicians and intellectuals, India’s places of learning have been hollowed out, the administration and professors chosen for their political ideology rather than basic levels of proficiency.

Modi is right to criticize an India in which modernity came to be synonymous with Westernization, so that all those ideas and principles that might have had universal valence became the preserve of those

who were exposed to European and American culture. What Modi cannot—or will not—do is tell India the hard truth that if she wishes to be a great power, and not a Hindu theocracy, the medieval Indian past, mired in superstition and magic, must go under. It is not enough to be more truly oneself. “In India, as in Europe,” wrote the great Sri Lankan historian A.K. Coomaraswamy, “the vestiges of ancient civilization must be renounced: we are called from the past and must make our home in the future. But to understand, to endorse with passionate conviction, and to love what we have left behind us is the only possible foundation for power.” The desperation that underlies Modi’s India is that of people clinging to the past, ill-equipped for the modern world, people in whom the zealot love of country stands in for real confidence.

The question of what is hers, and what has come from the outside, is a constant source of anxiety in India. The same process that made the Indian elite “foreigners in their own land”—in Mahatma Gandhi’s phrasing—is repeating, albeit unevenly, throughout the country across classes and groups never exposed to Western norms and culture in the past. “Our culture is being decimated,” one young member of the ABVP—the most powerful Hindu nationalist youth organization in the country—told me in Varanasi. “Many in my family have received degrees in commerce; but I chose to be nearer my culture. A great civilization, like ours, cannot be subdued without the complicity of men on the inside, working against us. Someone—I cannot say who—is controlling us, and there is but the difference of a syllable between *vikas* [development] and *vinasha* [ruin].”

**Modi has in every field privileged authenticity over ability, leading India down the road to a profound anti-intellectualism**





This young Hindu nationalist is part of a new generation of Indians, untouched by colonization, but not spared globalization. They live with a profound sense of being trifled with. They feel their culture and religion has been demeaned; they entertain fantasies of “Hinduphobia” and speak with contempt of “sickluars,” “libtards” and the “New Yuck Times.” One has the feeling they are converting their sense of cultural loss into a political ideology. It produces in them a rage for the Other—Muslims, lower castes, the Indian elite—“the men on the inside,” who have more generations of Westernization behind them. Last month, Amit Shah compared Muslim immigrants to “termites,” and the BJP’s official Twitter handle no longer bothers with dog whistles: “We will remove every single infiltrator from the country, except Buddha [sic], Hindus and Sikhs.” If this wasn’t bad enough, the BJP’s candidate for the central Indian city of Bhopal, with its rich Muslim history and a Muslim population of over 25%, is a saffron-clad female saint, who stands accused of masterminding a terrorist attack in which six people were killed near a mosque. Currently out on bail, Sadhvi Pragya Thakur’s candidacy marks that all-too-familiar turn when the specter of extreme nationalism and criminality become inseparable.

Modi’s India feels like a place where the existing order of things has passed away, without any credible

▲  
Cows are sacred to Hindus. Cow-protection mobs have killed at least 46 people since 2015. Most targets were Muslim

new order having come into being. Modi has won—and may yet win again—but to what end? His brand of populism has certainly served as a convincing critique of Indian society, of which there could be no better symbol than the Congress Party. They have little to offer other than the dynastic principle, yet another member of the Nehru-Gandhi family. India’s oldest party has no more political imagination than to send Priyanka Gandhi—Rahul’s sister—to join her brother’s side. It would be the equivalent of the Democrat’s fielding Hillary Clinton again in 2020, with the added enticement of Chelsea as VP.

Modi is lucky to be blessed with so weak an opposition—a ragtag coalition of parties, led by the Congress, with no agenda other than to defeat him. Even so, doubts assail him, for he must know he has not delivered on the promise of 2014. It is why he has resorted to looking for enemies within. Like other populists, he sits in his white house tweeting out his resentment against the sultanate of “them.” And, as India gets ready to give this willful provincial, so emblematic of her own limitations, a second term, one cannot help but tremble at what he might yet do to punish the world for his own failures.

*Taseer, a novelist and journalist, is the author, most recently, of The Twice-Born: Life and Death on the Ganges*



## VIEWPOINT

# India's best hope for economic reform

By Ian Bremmer

TO WIN A FRESH MANDATE for himself and his party in India's upcoming elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made extravagant promises and worrisome threats. He can fairly be accused of fanning flames of hostility toward India's Muslim population of up to 200 million, and when terrorists killed at least 40 Indian paramilitary troops in the disputed province of Kashmir earlier this year, Modi ordered airstrikes into Pakistani territory, a dangerous escalation by one nuclear-armed power against another.

His economic record is mixed. Although India has become the world's fastest-growing large economy, in January a leaked government survey (after the Modi government refused to release the data) showed the unemployment rate hit a 45-year high (6.1%) in 2017. To create a governing majority following the announcement of national election results later this month, Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will probably have to find coalition partners. That, in turn, would water down some of his second-term plans.

Yet, India still needs change, and Modi remains the person most likely to deliver. He has improved relations with China, the U.S. and Japan, but it's his domestic development agenda that has done the most to improve the lives and prospects of hundreds of millions of people. Consider what he's already accomplished during

five years in charge.

First, he's ensured that the government has more revenue to spend. Thanks to the Goods and Services Tax enacted in 2017, Modi has streamlined an enormously complex system of state and federal tax collection, broadening the tax base and sharply reducing the amount of money lost to fraud. That's a historic accomplishment in a country with so many development needs.

Modi has directed unprecedented amounts of money toward the country's seemingly endless need for new infrastructure. Construction of roads, highways, public transport and airports have sharply increased the country's long-term economic potential. Although the process remains unfinished, the government has also brought electricity to remote villages that have never had it, a boon for economic potential, public safety and basic quality of life.

The BJP-led government has also expanded a biometric identification system, begun under the previous Congress Party-led government, that has already taken iris scans and fingerprints from well over a billion people to help citizens prove who they are so they can receive services. It has provided bank accounts for 300 million people who have never had them, creating new opportunities for these people to access credit and state subsidies. It also brings them into the formal economy to potentially make the government more respon-

sive to their needs. The government says these measures have cut sharply into waste and fraud within India's welfare system, allowing the state to provide more and better services at a much lower cost.

Health care reform could help half a billion poor people afford treatment for cancer and heart disease. A program known as Ujjwala Yojana has helped women in the countryside gain access to cooking gas for the first time. The Swachh Bharat program has built tens of millions of toilets for hundreds of millions of people. Modi's commitment to renewable energy is part of his plan to make India a leader on climate change. None of these projects are complete, but all of them will help the vast majority of India's people lead safer, healthier, more productive and more prosperous lives.

What does it take to bring that scale of change in a country with 1.34 billion people who speak dozens of different languages and hundreds of dialects spread across states with differing customs and political cul-

tures while competing for votes against dozens of national and local political parties? Thanks to his reform accomplishments, but also in part to his tough line on Pakistan and his appeal to Hindu pride, Modi is even more popular now than when he was first elected five years ago. Voters in states hit by past terrorist attacks, especially those along the border with Pakistan, want a forceful Prime Minister they believe will protect them.

Modi also benefits from a lack of a credible alternative. The opposition Congress Party's election platform centers on a program that would provide direct cash payments to 50 million poor families. But a promise is not a plan, the BJP controls enough states to block a Congress government's projects and Modi has already delivered for many people.

Modi has the instinct to dominate and the thin skin of other strongmen, but he also has a genuine track record in providing the kind of reform that developing India urgently needs. □



Umakant Sharma works the looms in Surat, India





Nation

# Unfinished Business

NEARLY TWO DECADES AGO, WOMEN ACROSS THE COUNTRY SUED WALMART FOR GENDER DISCRIMINATION. THEIR FIGHT ISN'T OVER  
BY BRYCE COVERT





*In a lawsuit filed against  
Walmart this month,  
Stephanie Chapman alleges  
that she was paid less than  
men in similar positions*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELLA  
DEMCHUK FOR TIME



From the time she got her job at Pace Membership Warehouse in Roseville, Calif., in 1993, Claudia Renati was determined to advance. Her husband had been injured and couldn't work, and the housing market plummeted in the early '90s, hitting them hard. "I needed steady income to keep our house," she recalls.

When Sam's Club, a warehouse retailer owned by Walmart, bought Pace in 1993, Renati was optimistic. The orientation materials described how high-performing employees could take part in the manager-in-training (MIT) program, a prerequisite for shifting from hourly roles to salaried management. She dreamed of running her own store.

"I worked my butt off year after year with excellent reviews," she says. Renati kept asking for promotions. Instead, other people—"the white-boy frat," she says—were put in the positions she sought, and she had to train them. Many didn't have Renati's experience; one was a microbiologist.

At one point, Renati says, a district manager told her that to get into the MIT program, she would have to move to Alaska. She pointed out that she had trained plenty of men who had gotten promotions without uprooting to Alaska and that she was willing to move to other Sam's Clubs in their area to do her training. But this boss wouldn't budge.

Eventually she watched more than a dozen men get promoted over her. She developed depression, anxiety and high blood pressure, all of which she attributes to the stress of what she went through. "A part of you is torn out every time you applied and they never gave you a chance," she says. Each time, she'd come home and cry. "And then I'd get up the next day and go to work."

Renati is hardly the only woman who believes she's been mistreated by Walmart. Women across the country are lodging complaints against the company. From a former employee at a Kentucky store to a current one who has worked at

four different locations in Virginia, the allegations are remarkably similar: the women earned less than men in similar roles, were told that the men needed the money to support their families, were less likely to be promoted, had to train the men who became their supervisors and had their advancement restricted by policies that didn't seem to apply to their male co-workers.

Renati, who left Sam's Club in 2002, says she plans to file suit later this month in California accusing the retail giant of gender discrimination. When she does, she will join several hundred women in at least a dozen states who have filed complaints since the end of last year or will be doing so soon, according to Joseph M. Sellers, an attorney at the law firm Cohen Milstein who has worked on these cases since the 2000s and is coordinating among local counsels.

Walmart says it treats women fairly. "The allegations from these plaintiffs are more than 15 years old and are not representative of the positive experiences millions of women have had working at Walmart," company spokesperson Randy Hargrove wrote in an email. "We've said that if one of these plaintiffs believes they have been treated unfairly, they deserve to have their timely, individual claims heard in court."

That women might earn less than their male counterparts is unsurprising considering that American women still make 20% less than men, with the gap widening for women of color. But the discrepancies in retail are particularly bad: female salespeople made just 74% of what men did in 2017, and female supervisors made 72%, according

to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

As the world's largest private-sector employer, Walmart "is kind of a billboard for what employment practices should or shouldn't be," says Ariane Hegewisch, program director of employment and earnings at the Institute for Women's Policy Research. But while it matters that it's Walmart, "also what matters is really the in-your-face discrimination."

The current political landscape may also heighten interest. After the election of President Trump, the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh, the cascade of #MeToo accusations and other events that, for many women, highlighted the injustices they have faced for far too long, there's a widespread desire to fight back in the name of a more equitable society.

"If these women are successful in bringing their claims and having their rights vindicated, it's another thing that continues to push us forward at this time that feels in some ways so difficult," says Sarah Fleisch Fink, general counsel and director of workplace policy at the National Partnership for Women & Families.

Even if they aren't, they're likely to add "fuel to the fire," she says. "And I think it's a bigger deal because it's Walmart."

**THESE CLAIMS** against the world's largest retailer do indeed stretch back two decades. In 2001, a Walmart greeter in Pittsburg, Calif., named Betty Dukes filed a class action, calling the company "an industry leader not only in size, but also in its failure to advance its female employees." Renati was among the first women to join and submitted a declaration to the court detailing her claims.

In a motion for class certification filed





*Renati says she wasn't given opportunities to advance at Sam's Club, a Walmart-owned retailer*

in 2003, the plaintiffs' attorneys laid out a pattern of discrimination. "What is striking about their stories," they wrote, "is that, even though they worked in different stores, in different states, and in different departments, they experienced the same discriminatory policies and suffered the same adverse effects." They cited an analysis conducted on behalf of the plaintiffs finding that in 2001, women made up 67% of the company's hourly workers but only about 14% of store managers; their ranks thinned at every step up the company's hierarchy.

According to the motion, there was no official system for applying for promotions and open positions weren't posted anywhere; instead, people were promoted by getting tapped on the shoulder, allowing managers' preferences to outweigh experience. Managers likewise had broad discretion about pay, which meant women kept finding out that men in the same jobs were making more. Walmart also had a policy that employees had to be willing to relocate in order to train for a management role—a deal breaker for many women with families. And, the motion says, women were consistently placed in so-called "soft line" departments like cosmetics or clothing, while men oversaw "hard lines" like

sporting goods, electronics and gardening, which were higher-grossing and better positioned them to move up. A later analysis would find that similarly qualified men were three to four times as likely to be promoted as women and that women were paid less than men across stores, even when controlling for experience, performance and position.

Discriminating against female employees has been illegal since the 1960s, when the Equal Pay Act barred unequal pay for equal work and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act banned discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Under these laws, women still have to file lawsuits and prove they've been mistreated. Former Goodyear employee Lilly Ledbetter, for example, didn't find out she was being underpaid until she had worked at a tire plant for almost 20 years. The Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that she had run out of time to file her lawsuit under Title VII. But the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, signed by President Obama in 2009, gave women more time to file claims. Democrats in Congress have also repeatedly introduced the Paycheck Fairness Act, which they say would close loopholes in the Equal Pay Act and promote pay transparency but opponents

argue would be a gift to trial lawyers.

In the Walmart case, the women claimed the company had violated their rights under Title VII. Lower courts certified the Dukes class, but in 2011 the Supreme Court ruled that the plaintiffs—as many as 1.5 million female employees—did not have enough in common to be considered a class.

"That was just a blow," Renati says. "It was just overwhelming sadness that nothing happened for me, that I didn't get my day in court ... It left an open wound that's never healed."

Originally the plan was to regroup the claims into regional classes. Then in 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in an unrelated case that after a class action is struck down, the subsequent lawsuits have to be brought individually, not as smaller classes, to be considered timely.

It was yet another setback but not one that would cause the women to abandon their complaints. After all, attorneys for the plaintiffs point out, the courts haven't ruled on the actual claims. So far, their hurdles have been procedural.

While they can no longer band together in a single lawsuit, the women believe there's still value in coordinating with one another. A united front delivers





*Demonstrators protest the Supreme Court's 2011 decision in a gender-discrimination lawsuit against Walmart*

both moral support and more visibility to their ongoing battle with a behemoth that generates more than \$500 billion in annual revenue.

"The cumulative nature of many cases being filed across the country at the same time can still be helpful in shedding a bigger light on what's happened at Walmart," says Fink, the general counsel for the National Partnership for Women & Families, which, like the Institute for Women's Policy Research, filed amicus briefs in the original case but is not involved in the current cases.

Some women have moved on. Others are determined to be a part of what they hope is the final wave of litigation. "I'll keep fighting," says Renati, "until I'm not here anymore."

**IN OCTOBER, LISSA MEDEIROS** will mark her 20-year anniversary as a Walmart employee. She started out on the overnight shift in Fredericksburg, Va. Then, several years in, a man from outside the company was hired onto her team. Although it was against company rules to discuss pay—another policy that women believe held them back—"he was kind of a cocky guy," she says, "bragging about what his pay rate was." It was \$2 an hour more than hers.

She asked the assistant managers about it, but according to a charge of discrimination filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), they would "just shake their heads and change the subject." She worried about pushing too much.

"When you have mouths to feed, when you have a roof over your head you have to pay for, you limit yourself on how much further you want to go," she says.

Like Renati, Medeiros recalls being repeatedly passed over for promotions and then having to train the men who got the jobs. "When there was an opportunity to make more money, I went for it," she says. And yet she never made it into management, despite performing many of the duties. "I was good enough to show a male associate how to do the job, but I wasn't good enough to get promoted in that position."

This month, Medeiros filed a lawsuit in Virginia, claiming that the retailer discriminated against her and other women on the basis of their gender. One of her co-plaintiffs is Stephanie Chapman, who, according to the complaint, learned she was making \$2,000 less than men who held similar positions. The lawsuit also states that when one of Chapman's co-workers asked for an explanation of her

pay discrepancy, she was told that the men "have families to support." At the time, Chapman says, she was the breadwinner for her family of four. Choking up, she explains that they made ends meet only because of her ailing father's financial support. Like other women interviewed for this story, she describes a "good ol' boy" system. The men went to ballgames and drank together; she was never invited.

Chapman had loved working for Walmart at first but eventually left for another retailer. At her new company, Chapman's spirits quickly lifted. "It was like coming out of the clouds," she says. "You felt appreciated."

Walmart offered a steady paycheck to Paulette Owens, a single mother of four in Kentucky, who had been relying on commissions as a car salesperson. But one day over lunch, two fellow male managers volunteered what they were paid. According to a lawsuit she filed with two other former employees in April, the men's hourly wages were "significantly" higher. "They hadn't been there any longer than we had," she says. "They were doing the same job we were doing."

Owens too decided to go against policy and ask her store manager why the men were making more. "He said, 'Well,





*Betty Dukes, the lead plaintiff in the original class action, speaks in front of the Supreme Court in 2011*

they're heads of their families,'" she recalls. When she responded that she was the provider for her family too, he walked away. She says that reaction "let me know right then and there that there was no conversation, there was no debate, there was nothing else to talk about." Her lower pay meant she and her family couldn't go out to eat, take vacations or afford a new car. "When I clocked in every day, I came in and I did the best job that I could do," Owens says. "It's hard to go in [and] do your job when you feel like they don't know your worth."

**IT'S BEEN A LONG SLOG** over the past 18 years. Betty Dukes died in 2017. Many of the original plaintiffs are now not just parents but grandparents. Yet the women involved in this round of litigation, like Medeiros, have no intention of backing down.

Walmart, says Medeiros, "has to change." She'll soon start her third decade at the company and insists that gender discrimination "totally continues to happen."

According to Hargrove, the Walmart spokesperson, the company has "had a strong policy against discrimination in place for many years and it continues to be a great place for women to work and advance." In 2004, the company instituted

pay bands intended to take some subjective bias out of compensation. In 2005, it put in effect a system that would give new hires "credits" for previous work experience. But a 2018 motion for class certification states that women were still paid less; the changes "may have changed the mechanism through which it caused the pay disparity, but not the existence of the pay disparity," it says.

According to the company's latest report to the EEOC, women made up nearly 60% of its workforce in 2017 but 70% of its sales workers; on the other hand, they represented 43% of store management and less than a third of senior executives.

Walmart has made other changes in the intervening years. Hargrove says the company launched a Women's Resource Council 12 years ago for employee networking, as well as Walmart Academies

in 2016 to provide training for workers who want to move up the ranks. Sixty percent of those trained have been women, he said. He also said that in the latest fiscal year women accounted for 57% of its U.S. hourly promotions and 43% of management promotions and that in 2016 the company began using a culture, diversity and inclusion scorecard that helps provide biannual reports to senior management.

"Our compensation plans and practices are designed to comply with all laws. Our salary and wage ranges are based on objective factors regardless of gender or race," he said. "We're continually reviewing these practices to make sure we as a company are living up to our commitment."

But the plaintiffs say women continue to be held back. "There are still holes in those policies, still holes in those structures," says Medeiros.

As the women move forward with their individual lawsuits, they're not just concerned about their own treatment, Medeiros explains. They also want to make sure that other women don't go through what they went through.

"I will be there at the finish line," she says. "I don't want to run halfway and decide, 'Nah, I'm too tired now.'" □

**JUST 14% OF STORE MANAGERS IN 2001 WERE WOMEN, ACCORDING TO AN ANALYSIS DONE FOR THE PLAINTIFFS**



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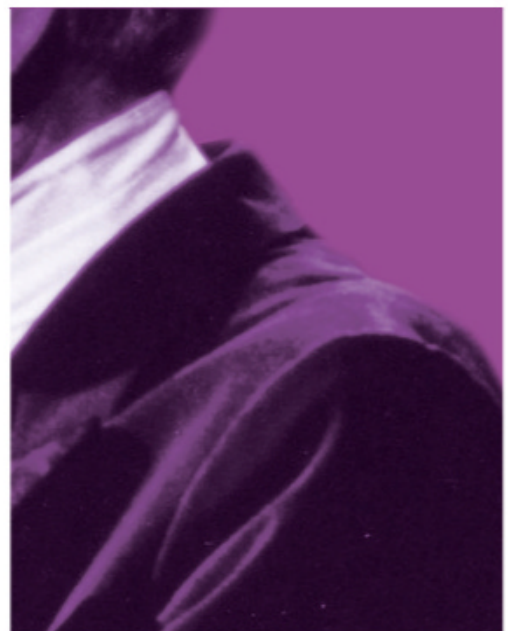
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# Time Off

**SISTER ACT**  
Rachel Keller,  
left, and Kathryn  
Newton co-star in  
the provocative  
*Lord of the  
Flies* update  
*The Society*

## INSIDE

HOW A TEAM OF VISUAL-EFFECTS  
WIZARDS MADE PIKACHU REAL

THE UNTOLD SECOND ACT OF  
HARPER LEE'S LIFE

AN R&B STAR SEIZES HER  
INDEPENDENCE



## TELEVISION

### A Netflix hit you won't see coming

By Judy Berman

**A**ROUND FIVE YEARS AGO, CHRISTOPHER Keyser found himself pondering the state of human society. “How did we get here?” he asked himself. “And is this the best we could have done?” These are the kind of big questions that fuel great literature, but Keyser, who co-created the ’90s prime-time hit *Party of Five*, works in television. So he, alongside director and fellow executive producer Marc Webb (*500 Days of Summer*), endeavored to translate his inquiries onto the screen in the form of a show that would be both philosophical and entertaining.

The result is *The Society*, a surprising, provocative, occasionally messy yet frequently revelatory series whose first season arrives on Netflix on May 10. Its appeal may not be obvious from the banal pilot, which recalls recent teen sci-fi serials like the CW’s *The 100* and Netflix’s *The Rain*: Beset by an unexplained nauseating odor, the wealthy New England town of West Ham sends a few busloads of high schoolers to the mountains to wait out an investigation. But when the kids return home, the town is empty of people. It soon becomes clear that not only are the adults gone for good, but the town is now somehow physically closed off from civilization. It’s an intriguing enough twist to keep skeptics hooked as the show’s true themes—and life-or-death stakes—develop at a pace that feels organic.

Suddenly alone, the teens don’t know whether they’ve returned to a radically altered West Ham or been transported to some other place that’s uncannily similar, down to the contents of each house. Can they survive? Will they find a way out? Are their parents dead or just somewhere else? Questions like this would dominate most stories with a similar setup. But the sci-fi elements turn out to be a bait and switch; nothing magical happens after the bus trip. Instead, within three episodes, *The Society* evolves into something remarkably ambitious: a work of political philosophy that’s partly inspired by *Lord of the Flies* but feels especially pressing in a post-Parkland world, where young people have shown the capacity for both unspeakable cruelty and inspiring efforts for social change. Everything that makes this show riveting—the alliances, rivalries, violence, even deaths, along with glimpses of empathy and hope—comes out of the students’ struggles to build a new civilization in their town.

“My real desire,” Keyser tells me, “is to do something that feels like roller-coastery entertainment but then suddenly makes you ask questions that you didn’t think you were going to ask.” He succeeds: viewers will find themselves agonizing over teenage love triangles, then weighing opposing views on socialism, criminal justice or gun ownership. Shocking twists allow the show to, as Keyser puts it, “talk about big things in a way that’s fun.”



^  
In *The Society*, a group of teens must form a new civilization after all the adults in their town mysteriously disappear

To get a young audience to engage with such heavy ideas without feeling like they’re doing homework, Keyser, Webb and their collaborators flesh out a familiar high school social structure, grounding ideological conflicts in relatable teen characters: jocks, theater kids, loners, nerds. “This is essentially a character show, though it’s got high stakes,” says Keyser. At its center are Cassandra (*Legion*’s Rachel Keller), a bright, preternaturally mature leader, and her younger sister Allie (standout Kathryn Newton, of *Big Little Lies* and *Blockers*), a timid misfit who lives in Cassandra’s shadow. The girls’ cousins represent opposite extremes of the moral spectrum: while Sam (*Switched at Birth* fan favorite Sean Berdy) is a gentle, loyal kid who happens to be deaf and gay, his brother Campbell (a chilling Toby Wallace) has a sadistic streak. Expanding out from these four, around two dozen named characters populate this isolated world with a wide range of perspectives.

Without losing any of their specificity, these personalities become avatars for ideologies that traverse the political compass, from communism





to libertarianism to fascism. This may require some suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer, to be sure—it's jarring to hear 16-year-olds deploy bureaucratic idioms like *undisclosed location* and *predawn raid*. But this dissonance reflects a conscious decision. "We wrote about younger characters, but we treated them in some ways as if they might as well be adults," Keyser says. "I hope that kids who watch it, at whatever age, feel like they're not being talked down to." To that end, scripts are studded with references to Shakespeare, Greek theater and historical figures like Queen Elizabeth I.

**THE SHOW REFLECTS** Keyser's personal obsessions. He has a background in law and politics, and cops to a fascination with "how we order societies." *The Society* is remarkably persuasive in its demonstration of how personalities translate into politics and how quickly public sentiment around a particular leader can shift.

Yet he's quick to reject the auteur designation lavished on "difficult men" like *The Wire*'s David Simon and

*Mad Men*'s Matthew Weiner, insisting that "this is not a show by me—it's a show by all of us." For Keyser, the crew's diversity of backgrounds—from co-executive producer Pavlina Hatoupis, who's lived all over the world, to a writing staff that includes playwright Qui Nguyen, the son of Vietnamese immigrants, and acclaimed novelist Maile Meloy—is crucial.

Gender parity in the writers' room and among the directors pays off in *The Society*'s perceptive depiction of women in power. The casual sexism of high school boys devolves into a virulent form of misogyny. Brute force challenges egalitarian democracy. "This is intended to be a conversation about the way in which men and women need to figure out how to work and live together," says Keyser.

The final layer of creative input came from the young actors. "We changed the story," Newton tells me. Keyser and Webb, she says, "saw us take ownership of these characters. And that was because we knew that they believed in us and gave us the freedom to run wild."

Their performances are essential to rendering the characters' transitions from privileged teens to leaders, enforcers, peacemakers and insurgents believable.

**UNLIKELY AS IT MAY SOUND**, this weird, high-minded teen drama has a good chance of becoming a big hit. Along with relative newcomers in breakout roles (Jack Mulhern as sensitive athlete Grizz; Natasha Liu Bordizzo as de facto spiritual leader Helena), it features young stars like Berdy, Newton and her fellow *Blockers* alum Gideon Adlon—all familiar faces among the target audience. Built to binge, it promises to set social media on fire with its twists. And to an even greater extent than *Stranger Things* or *Riverdale*, *The Society* is sophisticated enough to win over adults.

But its most important advantage may be its platform, Netflix, which claimed earlier this year to have drawn tens of millions of viewers to youthful offerings like *Sex Education* and *You*.

Though he's still adjusting to the pace of binge viewership—"I'm way too old to be excited about that," Keyser jokes—he says it would've been tough to get *The Society*, which was originally conceived for Showtime, made in the *Party of Five* era. Until recently, a platform with the bandwidth to greenlight such a wild experiment would've been unthinkable.

Of course, the lives of teenagers have also changed in the generation that separates the two series. Kids who grew up amid Obama-era progressivism must now make sense of a chaotic presidency, a resurgence of both socialism and authoritarianism, terrifying climate-change projections, and the rise of massive activist movements like Black Lives Matter and #MeToo. Netflix viewers abroad are sure to see parallels to Brexit or violent governmental power struggles.

Keyser acknowledges that in such a politicized moment, his show feels uncommonly urgent. It's easy to find characters reminiscent of Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. Yet Keyser rightly points out that its themes are universal. "There are things going on now that

seem epic, but there are generations that fight wars—or even today are in cultures where the questions asked are huge," he says. "But they behave like ordinary people on ordinary days." Hence the allusions to *Hamlet* and Aeschylus, as well as the persistence of everyday preoccupations like love, identity and resources.

For 22-year-old Newton, what's most exciting is the show's faith that young people are capable of grasping these big ideas. "Teenagers are so complicated and interesting," she says. "And I don't find a lot of that on TV. I find them oversexualized or stereotyped." Her wish is that it makes this audience ask: "Who are they when nobody's watching? And what are the things that you really value in your life?" As these characters are forced into a more extreme version of the adulthood that awaits every teen, the stakes become all too real. "I hope," she says, "it puts our values in perspective." □

**'Teenagers are so complicated and interesting. And I don't find a lot of that on TV.'**

**KATHRYN NEWTON**, star of *The Society*, on what drew her to this show





## FEATURE

### Breathing life into Pikachu

By Andrew R. Chow

WHEN THE TRAILER FOR *DETECTIVE PIKACHU* WAS released last fall, a debate erupted online over a seemingly trivial question: Does Pikachu have fur?

While the cartoon version of the beloved Pokémon has a smooth exterior, the trailer for the live-action film adaptation, which opens May 10, showed the mouselike creature covered in yellow fur, worn thin in some places and scruffily overgrown in others. Many fans were repulsed. “Seeing Pikachu with fur is just extremely unsettling and wrong and shouldn’t exist,” one user wrote on Twitter.

But for the film’s visual-effects supervisor Erik Nordby, the answer was obvious. “How can it not be furry?” he asks. “It would be this hard-surfaced yellow thing—the most disturbing thing in the world.”

The fiery conflict over such a minor detail exemplifies the challenge that the creative team behind *Detective Pikachu* faced in making the first live-action film in the 24-year history of Pokémon, a wildly popular Japanese anime and video-game series that exploded in the ’90s. Animating animals, as in recent live-action remakes of titles like *The Jungle Book*, is one matter. But transforming adored fictional creatures that have been drawn in one specific way for two decades is another entirely. The process saw more than a thousand digital artists across the world working for three years through trial and error, all against a backdrop of ceaseless debate.

*Detective Pikachu* follows a former Pokémon trainer (Justice Smith) as he investigates his father’s murder by reluctantly teaming up with a Pikachu (voiced by Ryan Reynolds, right). The

↑  
*Hundreds of animators across the world worked on bringing Pokémon into three dimensions*



creative team faced an elementary problem from the jump: many Pokémon creatures are physical impossibilities. One, Gyarados, has a gaping mouth that takes up most of its body and leaves little room for organs; Lickitung’s enormous tongue is far too large for its mouth.

After workshoping many Pokémon, the team settled on around 65 that would appear in the movie. “We’d build them as if they were an actual animal,” Nordby says. The team created detailed skeletal and muscle systems for each Pokémon, visited zoos and consulted animal experts in order to have a reference point for every beak, tail or paw. Pikachu started off most resembling a rabbit but eventually became an amalgam inspired by the movements of marsupials and marmosets, with the moonlike eyes of sugar gliders.

**THE POKÉMON COMPANY**, however, had a different main priority: to protect its characters’ unique charms. They feared the filmmakers were making their Pokémon too dirty, and the push and pull between cuteness and gritty realism resulted in dozens of sketches being sent back and forth. Jigglypuff, a cuddly singing sphere, was drawn with a pigskin-like exterior before receiving closely cropped fur. Pikachu’s vibrantly yellow fur grew, shrank and fluctuated in color—the team took swatches of actual fur to filming locations to see how its colors would react to natural light. Once the designs were finalized, a puppeteering company in London was commissioned to create 3-D Pokémon models and then operate them during filming. Details were sharpened during postproduction using CGI.

Since the initial outcry over Pikachu’s fur, the general consensus online seems to have flipped over into enthusiastic anticipation—much to the relief of the creative team. “What a razor’s edge it is,” says Nordby, “trying to find that character and knowing how many millions of people love it.” □





Hoult's author: man, not myth

## REVIEW

### Early Tolkien

You don't have to be a *Lord of the Rings* fan to enjoy *Tolkien*, Finnish director Dome Karukoski's sensitive, smart picture about the formative years of J.R.R. Tolkien. Nicholas Hoult is extraordinary in the title role, as a bright young man of little means who relies on scholarships to get him through Oxford—and who, as he struggles to finish that education, risks losing his first love, Edith (played with understated allure by Lily Collins).

Through it all, we see young Tolkien inventing Elvish-sounding languages and sketching all kinds of winged and slithery beasties, ideas that will be the foundation of his later work. The film focuses partly on Tolkien's courtship of Edith and partly on the friendships he forged with a group of schoolmates, particularly Geoffrey (Anthony Boyle)—there's a superb, wrenching scene between the two. *Tolkien* also features a terrifying, semidreamlike re-creation of the Battle of the Somme: the real-life horrors he saw on the battlefield presage the darker elements of the *Lord of the Rings* books. Tolkien created one of the 20th century's most enduring works of fantasy. But he lived through a version of hell along the way. —Stephanie Zacharek

## REVIEW

### Just faintly nutty notes in *Wine Country*

MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN ARE FUNNY—to themselves as well as to everybody else—and no one knows it better than they do. Plus, there are few enough roles out there for middle-aged women actors, funny or otherwise. So *Wine Country*, directed by Amy Poehler for Netflix and featuring a cast made up of former *Saturday Night Live* alumnae, should be the ideal Venn-diagram center of those two worlds.

If only. *Wine Country* springs to life here and there, but there's something dispiriting about the way these women seem to be working hard for laughs rather than just being funny. Rebecca (Rachel Dratch) is about to turn 50, and Abby (Poehler) has planned a getaway weekend for her and a group of close-knit friends: there's Catherine (Ana Gasteyer), a businesswoman who can't stay off her phone; Val (Paula Pell), single, randy and on the hunt for a new girlfriend; Naomi (Maya Rudolph), a wife and mom who, unbeknownst to the group, is waiting for the results of a cancer test; and Jenny (Emily Spivey, who also co-wrote the film, with Liz Cackowski), a neurotic grouch who doesn't really want to be there, though there's emotional generosity beneath her

crabbiness. Tina Fey pops in as Tammy, the plain-talkin', log-totin' owner of the house the group has rented.

It's a weekend of bickering, bonding and hangovers, in which these performers strive to capture the way women talk when men are out of the picture. Mostly, the characters show unwilting support for one another, though they can't resist peeling off into groups of two to talk behind the others' backs. (The movie makes a running gag out of the classic preamble "May I just say something?")

But even this mild degree of cattiness becomes tiresome, if only because you know there's a cushy group hug waiting at the end. The finest moments of *Wine Country* are the ones in which the characters show how little they know, or care, about wine, and the dumbest, most tossed-off jokes work best. "This is good, what's it called again?" Jenny asks Abby as the two stand around at a tasting, sipping daintily from their goblets. "White wine," Abby says, her voice as dry as the frosty surface of a sauvignon blanc grape. What a dorky joke! Maybe it wasn't even in the script. But it's almost enough to make you do a spit take. —S.Z.



Poehler, Pell and Dratch: a toast to the miseries of middle age!





After publishing *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee took a stab at a different kind of story

## NONFICTION

### Harper Lee's true-crime days

By Lucas Wittmann

ONE OF THE GREAT MYSTERIES IN American literary history is what happened to Nelle Harper Lee after July 11, 1960, when *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published. While her novel sold millions of copies, Atticus became a household name and Gregory Peck collected an Oscar for his performance in the film adaptation, Lee virtually disappeared. And she never completed another book.

Debut author Casey Cep sets off to investigate Lee's life after *Mockingbird* in her vivid book *Furious Hours*, which travels the highways and byways of rural Alabama to tell the story of the Rev. Willie Maxwell, progressive lawyer Tom Radney and the book that Lee tried—and failed—to write about them.

Maxwell was a country preacher who was accused in the 1970s of murdering five of his family members—three of whom were found dead by the side of the road, with no clear cause of death. As Maxwell's relatives turned up dead, he managed to avoid conviction, dodging the police and collecting tens of thousands of dollars in life insurance from policies he had taken out on the victims. He was ably defended by his attorney Radney, whom Cep depicts as

the ideal country lawyer, but the spree ended when he was shot at the funeral of his stepdaughter—one of his alleged victims. Radney took up his killer as a client, who was acquitted on an insanity defense, and Lee began documenting this swirl of voodoo (which Maxwell was accused of practicing), post-civil rights tensions and the murder investigations.

Lee, who was suffering from a serious case of writer's block, had decided that in Maxwell and Radney she had found her next book. It won't spoil anything to say that Lee likely never finished it (Cep isn't certain), despite her investing years in toiling over first a nonfiction account and then a novel. But from that void comes a great gift: Cep's book is a marvel. In elegant prose, she gives us the fullest story yet of Lee's post-*Mockingbird* life in New York—boozy, unproductive, modest despite her means, yet full of books and theater—and her quest in Alabama, where she grew close to Radney and his family, to tell the Maxwell story. Cep's is an account emotionally attuned to the toll that great writing takes, and shows that sometimes one perfect book is all we can ask for, even while we wish for another. □

## YOUNG ADULT

### Pressure cooker

The first day of Emoni Santiago's senior year in high school is also her daughter's first day of day care. In the young-adult novel *With the Fire on High*, Elizabeth Acevedo shows what happens when a 17-year-old must fill the roles of both student and mother.

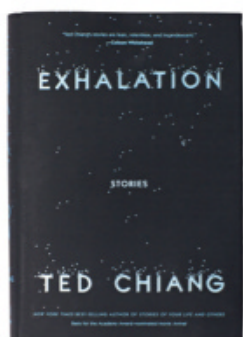
Emoni dreams of becoming a chef, but those dreams are superseded by the need to support her daughter and her *abuela* with an unfulfilling job at a burger joint. All that changes when a teacher persuades her to enroll in a culinary elective at school, and Emoni begins to wonder if she can balance following her passion with caring for her child.

Acevedo won a 2018 National Book Award for her debut young-adult novel, *The Poet X*, the story of an aspiring slam poet at odds with her religious mother. That novel was written in verse, and the lines in *With the Fire on High* also carry a palpable beat, amplified by references to Cardi B. In chapters filled with snappy dialogue and vivid descriptions of Emoni's recipes and her working-class neighborhood, Acevedo's second novel drives home the same potent message as her first: never underestimate the strength of a teenage girl.

—Annabel Gutterman







## SHORT STORIES

# New realities, same issues

The nine stories in Ted Chiang's *Exhalation* probe the intersections among technology, science and philosophy. They ask big what-if questions, from the implications of time travel on free will to the impact of kids being raised by machines.

In the longest story in the collection, "The Lifecycle of Software Objects," humans care for digital pets that have the capacity to learn and, perhaps, feel. A software tester develops an intense attachment to her digital companion and finds herself at odds with her peers. In "Anxiety Is the Dizziness of Freedom," characters see into alternate universes. One woman obsesses over the choices she's made when she learns that her niece was accepted to her dream college—but only in a parallel world.

Chiang, the author of *Stories of Your Life and Others*, which includes a novella that was the basis for Best Picture Oscar nominee *Arrival*, crafts imaginative narratives using clean, evocative prose. He glances into futures that feel far away—especially when he involves quantum mechanics—but renders them in affective terms. Both bizarre and relevant, the stories in *Exhalation* show that even as tech advances and everything seems to change, the human experience remains, mostly, the same. —A.G.



Chinese author Ma Jian's books have been banned in his homeland for more than 30 years

## FICTION

# The nightmare of a shared dream

By Suyin Haynes



MA JIAN, THE EXILED Chinese novelist, knows better than most the desire for freedom in a country where democracy is a dream and censorship is the norm. His debut, the 1987 short-story collection *Stick Out Your Tongue*, highlighted the brutal Chinese occupation of Tibet. The government condemned the book as "spiritual pollution" and permanently banned Ma's books from the country. Ma himself was banned from China after the publication of his 2013 novel, *The Dark Road*, about the impact of the nation's one-child policy.

Despite the opposition, or perhaps because of it, Ma remains determined to write about his homeland. Sensitive translations of Ma's work into English, written by his partner Flora Drew, have cemented his global reputation as a leading Chinese intellectual and critic of the Xi Jinping era. His latest book, *China Dream*, which draws on real people and events, is a searing satirical indictment of the ruling regime's injustice and fallibility. Its title echoes Xi's 2012 procla-

mation of the "China Dream," a vision of "national rejuvenation" commonly interpreted as an expression of his objective to make China the world's dominant superpower.

Protagonist Ma Daode is a fictitious high-ranking government official, portrayed with a pompous self-importance and a penchant for adultery. His ambition is to create a "China Dream Device" to be implanted in the mind of every citizen, replacing their private thoughts with Xi's state-sponsored messages—a setup in the vein of Orwellian dystopia. Ma, now a British citizen, has said that the vision of totalitarianism set forth in 1984 has been "completely and totally" realized in 21st century China.

In *China Dream*, his writing is most profound when depicting the human cost of an imposed national dream. A forced demolition of a clan village, presided over by Ma Daode, reflects the real practice of forced eviction. As his own past nightmares catch up with him, Ma Daode finds himself consumed by his search for the intangible "dream." Ever critical of a regime intent on stamping out dissent, Ma's biting voice lays bare a brutal reality that cannot be ignored. □





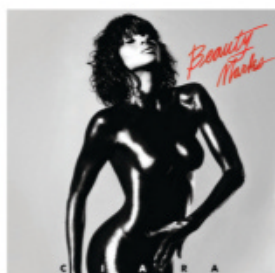
MUSIC

# Ciara finally gets her due

By Steven J. Horowitz

IT'S BEEN 15 YEARS SINCE THE SINGER CIARA erupted onto the scene, making her mark with breathy vocals and limber dancing. The rapper Lil Jon declared her the “first lady of Crunk&B” for her dominance over the grooving, bass-heavy pop-R&B style that was popular in the mid-aughts. She wasn't as vocally bombastic as Beyoncé, or as frank and eccentric as Lady Gaga, but she cornered her lane: shooting from the hip sonically while using her music as a gateway to put her full abilities on display as a performer, in creative music videos and electrifying live sets. It's tempting to draw a parallel between the trajectory of her career and that of Janet Jackson, to whom she's often compared—another artist whose creativity has earned her acclaim, if not always chart-topping hits.

Still, it's been too easy to underestimate Ciara, who has worked tirelessly for all this time to prove just how worthy she is of estimation without so much as breaking a sweat. More recognized for her showmanship than her artistry, she still remains best known for turn-up anthems like “Goodies” and “1, 2 Step,” and she doubled down on that style on her last album, 2015's *Jackie*. But when that album underperformed, she left her label,



On her first album as an independent artist, Ciara moves beyond the floor fillers that made her a star

Epic Records; most of the attention was focused on her personal life, a public split from the rapper Future and her eventual pairing with her now husband, NFL quarterback Russell Wilson, with whom she's since had a daughter. Her first album as an independent artist, *Beauty Marks*, sees her taking a step forward, and a closer look at herself. From an artist who has spent the lot of her career catering to the dance floor, her seventh offering is the closest we've come to understanding Ciara and the experiences that have walked her toward the woman she's become.

**CONFIDENCE IS THE MOOD** on *Beauty Marks*: in one breath she's vulnerable, inviting you into the specifics of her life, and in the next she's assertive, thumping her chest to the same tempo of her classic hits. The chewiest songs tackle what happens off the dance floor, like the title track, a piano-driven testimonial about the healing power of her relationship with Wilson: “Baby when you take my hand, you show me that my scars are beauty marks,” she sings. It's ultimately revisionist to the Ciara we've come to know, one who's tended to hide behind an 808's heartbeat. But it shows that even if the buoyancy of her records hasn't changed, the perspective and scope have.

That expression permeates *Beauty Marks*, an album that balances what fans have come to expect—fervent, perspiring thumpers like the hustler manifesto “Set” and the effortless “Level Up”—with what we haven't. The opener “I Love Myself,” featuring the rapper Macklemore, feels immediate and visceral, as if she's singing it from her bedroom in Atlanta. “Gotta protect this precious life I got, the future by my side/ Be the last time that I cry these tears again,” she sings in a near whimper. (Macklemore's painfully earnest verse is the album's biggest misstep.)

There are times when the message gets lost in the medium. Her lyrics can feel like Instagram affirmations—like “Takin' shortcuts get you cut short” or “I could smell your hate from 'bout a mile away/ You're mad that I just won't come down”—but that doesn't distract from its broader successes. She's comfortable in her womanhood and the power that comes with that: “Girl Gang,” featuring Kelly Rowland, is a champagne-spilling rallying call, and she freely admits the power that love can have over your better judgment on the '80s-indebted paean to nostalgia “Trust Myself.” Happiness and contentment suit her well, as does her newfound openness. This is the Ciara that we deserve, and that she deserves too. Apparently it was hiding in plain sight. □



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# 9 Questions

**Ruth Westheimer** The sex therapist, 90, on living with history, her advice for millennials and the new documentary about her life, *Ask Dr. Ruth*

**Y**ou were born in Germany and lived in Switzerland, Jerusalem and Paris before moving to the U.S. What was it like to revisit some of these places from your past while making this Hulu documentary? I was very careful where I took the documentary people. For example, I went to Switzerland to talk about how grateful I was to be there during World War II. Otherwise I would not be alive.

**And you take them to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum, where you find your parents in a database of victims of the Holocaust. Was that moment the first time you learned what happened to them?** When I saw in German *verschollen*, which means disappeared, next to my mother's name, I was shocked. I knew already that none of my immediate family survived, but to see it on a computer, I was very sad. I wanted to make clear there is a place where people can go and verify. I wanted to make sure Holocaust deniers know there is a place that refutes them.

**Recent years have seen a rise in anti-Semitic incidents. Given what you've lived through, are you surprised by that?** Very. I never would have dreamt that in 2019 we'd still have such incidents. I have to tell you something on that subject. Somebody who talks about sex from morning to night has to stay away from politics, but these days, I do say how upset I am when I see children separated from their parents, because that's my story, and how upset I am about people trying to make abortion illegal.

**But on topics like abortion, talking sex and talking politics go together. How do you decide which is which?** I know what I want to stand up for, and the other stuff I leave to people like you. I vote, but I don't participate in political campaigns. It always ends up by somebody asking me about somebody's sex life, and I just don't do that.

**“I DON'T PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. IT ALWAYS ENDS UP BY SOMEBODY ASKING ME ABOUT SOMEBODY'S SEX LIFE”**



**Sex and politics also meet in the public conversation on assault and consent. Has that changed anything about the way you see sex in America?** Absolutely. I think some people took it to an extreme. I believe that two consenting people, if they are in bed naked with each other and about to have sex, no way can they say in the middle, “I changed my mind.”

**A lot of people would disagree.**

I know. I'll tell you what I say to those people who disagree with me. Put it in big letters: I respect your opinion. Period. I don't engage in big fights like this. My opinion cannot be changed.

**You've commented on how hard it would've been to manage your fame if your kids had been younger when it first arrived. What's your advice for working parents?** They have to make time with no business phone calls, no texting, no computer—some time especially for young children. It doesn't matter how many hours. It just matters the quality of time. When they're with their children, make sure they give them full attention.

**Are there questions you've gotten over the years to which your answer changed?** I don't think so, but I'll tell you what has changed. I get more questions about people who, in a relationship, may be always looking [to see] if there's something better.

**Why do you think that is?** Because of the way the media depicts famous people. People have to be realistic.

**You're doing a new edition of *Sex for Dummies* for millennials. What needed to be added for them?** I talk about the loneliness. I talk about the art of conversation. I also talk about how you have to make time for sex, once you have a partner. And other good things. When it comes out, call me again.

—LILY ROTHMAN



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